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DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

سالار روزنامہ بنگلور

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## Biker dies after collision with BMTC bus

**BENGALURU, 24 OCT**

A 36-year-old biker, Anand, lost his life after being struck by a Bengaluru Metropolitan Transport Corporation (BMTC) bus near the BGS bus stop on Wednesday. The incident occurred around 8.30 pm while Anand was riding on Dr Vishnuvardhan Road. According to a statement from BMTC authorities, Anand attempted to overtake the bus, which was traveling from Shirke to Jayanagar. In doing so, he reportedly veered into the oncoming lane and collided head-on with another vehicle. The collision left Anand with severe head injuries, and he was promptly rushed to BGS Hospital. *—Salar News*

## Shankaracharya boycotts event over Sai Baba idol

**SHIMLA, 24 OCT**

Jyotispeethadheeswar Shankaracharya Avimukteshwaranand Saraswati, who was scheduled to participate in the "Gau Dhwaj" hoisting programme at a Ram temple here, boycotted the event and did not visit the temple as he was annoyed over the placement of an idol of Sai Baba there. Shankaracharya, who went to the Jakhoo temple for "Gau Dhwaj" hoisting in the morning, conveyed the message that he would not visit the Ram temple after he was informed that an idol of Sai Baba was placed in the shrine. "Sai Baba has no place in Hindu temple," he said. *—Salar News*

## Justice Khanna is new CJI, to take oath on 11 Nov

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Justice Sanjiv Khanna was on Thursday appointed the 51st Chief Justice of India. He will take oath on 11 November, a day after incumbent Justice DY Chandrachud demits office on attaining the age of 65. Justice Chandrachud took over as the CJI on 8 November, 2022. Justice Khanna will have a tenure of a little over six months as CJI and would demit office on 13 May, 2025. *—PTI*

# Schools shut, no trains as Dana nears Odisha & WB

## Cyclone will make landfall in Odisha at a speed of 120kmph

**BHUBANESWAR/ KOLKATA, 24 OCT**

Authorities in Odisha and West Bengal evacuated lakhs of people, shut schools, cancelled more than 400 trains and suspended flight operations as they braced on Thursday for severe cyclonic storm Dana, which is expected to make landfall in Odisha past midnight at a speed of 120kmph.

Odisha's Revenue and Disaster Management Minister Suresh Pujari said the government has deployed 385 rescue teams comprising 19 NDRF teams, ODRAF (51), Fire Service (220) and Forest staff (95). This apart, as many as 150 platoons (1 platoon comprise 30 personnel) of Odisha Police personnel have been pressed into service for rescue, road clearing and other activities at the ground level.

Claiming that the state was well prepared at the ground level to face the eventuality, Pujari said as many as 3.50 lakh people have so far been evacuated to the safety and house in 4,756 relief centres where they are provided with food and other materials. He said as many as 2,131 villages spread over 11 different districts would be affected in the cyclone.

Fishermen bring their boat to the dock after the water level of Dhamra river swells in view of cyclone 'Dana' *PHOTO: PTI*

As part of precautionary measures, the East Coast Railways cancelled 203 trains passing or originating through Odisha even as flight services remained suspended at the Biju Patnaik International Airport here for 16 hours from 5 pm of Thursday. Bus services have also been halted till the cyclone passes the state.

The IMD has forecast that the cyclone is likely to make landfall between Bhitarkanika National Park and Dhamra Port late Thursday night or early Friday morning.

IMD DG Mrutunjay Mohapatra said the system is likely to cause extremely heavy rainfall, tidal surge up to 2 meters and some districts to experience high velocity winds of 120 kmph during landfall of the system.

Reports of heavy downpour, squally wind and uprooting of trees have been received from some areas of Balasore, Bhadrak, Bhitarkania and Puri, leading to blocked roads, officials said, adding that highest rainfall of 62 mm was recorded at Paradip, while Rajnagar in Kendrapara district received 24 mm over the last four hours.

Meanwhile, the IMD issued a 'red warning' (take action) for heavy to very heavy rainfall and wind speed of 100 kmph to 110 kmph in four districts – Balasore, Bhadrak, Kendrapara and Jagatsinghpur – on Thursday night. Kolkata Port authorities also halted ship movements until Friday evening as a precautionary measure. Operations at Kolkata's Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport were suspended from 6 pm on Thursday until 9 am on Friday due to expected high winds and heavy rain. *—PTI*

***>>>More on Page 4***

## Boy dies after falling into 5ft deep pit in City

The pit was dug for a lift to be installed *PHOTO: SCREENGRAB*

**BENGALURU 24 OCT**

A five-year-old boy drowned in a five-foot-deep pit filled with rainwater on the premises of an under-construction building at Kannamangala in Kadugodi. Based on the complaint filed by the boy's mother, police have registered a case against the owner of the building and another person charging them with death due to negligence.

The drowning took place when the boy, Suhas Gowda, was playing near the building, which was being constructed to house a milk dairy, and slipped into the uncovered pit on Wednesday, police said. The pit had been dug to construct a lift. Locals pulled the boy out of the pit and took him to a nearby hospital, where the doctors declared him "brought dead".

The residents alleged that the building was being constructed without any safety measures. "The owner built a barrier around the pit after residents protested following the death. If these precautionary measures had been taken earlier, the death could have been avoided," a resident said.

Gowda was staying with his mother, a daily-wage worker, and grandmother near the under-construction house after they shifted from Kolar to Bengaluru. *—Salar News*

**AGAINST GUV'S SANCTION**

## CM files appeal against HC order on MUDA case

**BENGALURU, 24 OCT**

- He had challenged the legality of Gehlot's sanction for the investigation against him in the alleged irregularities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi BM by the MUDA.

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah has filed an appeal before the division bench of the High Court, challenging the decision of a single judge bench in connection with the Mysuru Urban Development Authority (MUDA) site allotment case that had come as a setback to him.

The bench of Justice M Nagaprasanna had on 24 September dismissed his petition challenging Governor Thaawarchand Gehlot's approval for a probe against him in the case, observing that the gubernatorial order nowhere "suffers from want of application of mind".

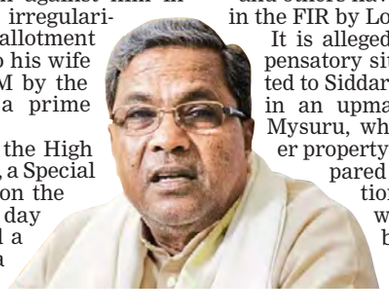
He had challenged the legality of Gehlot's sanction for the investigation against him in the alleged irregularities in the allotment of 14 sites to his wife Parvathi BM by the MUDA in a prime locality.

Following the High Court order, a Special Court here on the very next day had ordered a Lokayukta police probe against Siddaramaiah, and directed to file the investigation report by December 24.

On 30 September, the ED filed an enforcement case information report (ECIR) to book him.

Siddaramaiah, his wife, brother-in-law Mallikarjuna Swamy and Devaraju -- from whom Swamy had purchased a land and gifted it to Parvathi -- and others have been named in the FIR by Lokayukta.

It is alleged that 14 compensatory sites were allotted to Siddaramaiah's wife in an upmarket area in Mysuru, which had higher property value as compared to the location of her land which had been "acquired" by MUDA. *—PTI*



## Nikhil is NDA candidate for Channapatna bypoll

**BENGALURU, 24 OCT**

JD(S) leader Nikhil Kumaraswamy was on Thursday announced as the NDA candidate for 13 November Assembly bypolls from Channapatna, a seat vacated by his father and Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy after being elected to Lok Sabha.

The 36-year-old is pitted against five-time MLA from the segment and former minister CP Yogeeshwara of Congress, who joined the party after quitting BJP on Wednesday.

Nikhil's mother Anitha Kumaraswamy, a former MLA, had unsuccessfully contested from the seat in 2013, and faced defeat against Yogeeshwara, a political heavyweight in the constituency.

*PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD*

A meeting was held with alliance partner BJP, at veteran leader BS Yediyurappa's residence on Thursday, before Nikhil's name was formally announced. This is the third electoral battle for the actor-turned politician grandson of JD(S) patriarch and former Prime Minister HD Deve Gowda. He had unsuccessfully contested 2023 Assembly elections from Ramanagara and 2019 General Elections from Mandya Lok Sabha constituency. *—PTI*

## Congress picks Pathan for Shiggaon bypoll

**BENGALURU, 24 OCT**

Congress on Thursday announced Yasir Ahmed Khan Pathan as the party's candidate for 13 November Assembly bypoll from Shiggaon segment.

Pathan had faced defeat against former chief minister Basavaraj Bommai of the BJP in the 2023 Assembly polls.

Bypoll for Shiggaon is necessitated, as the seat fell vacant following the election of Bommai to Lok Sabha in May. BJP has fielded Bommai's son Bharath as its candidate.

The last date for filing nominations is 25 October, and the final date for withdrawal of papers is 30 October.

Congress had late on Wednesday night announced CP Yogeeshwara, who joined the party quitting BJP, and Ballari MP E Tukaram's wife E Annapurna as its candidates from Channapatna and Sandur, respectively. These two other segments in the State are also going for bypolls on 13 November.

Yasir Ahmed Khan Pathan *PHOTO: FB*

In Shiggaon, the party was in a dilemma, whether the ticket should be given to a Muslim or a Panchamasali Lingayat candidate, party sources said. Along with Pathan, the names of former MLA Syed Azeempeer Khadri, and ex-minister Vinay Kulkarni's daughter Vaishali Kulkarni were also doing rounds. *—PTI*

## Canada using Khalistan for poll gains: Envoy

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Calling Canada's behaviour "the pits", India's recalled High Commissioner Sanjay Verma says India was backstabbed and treated in a most unprofessional manner. He accused Canadian politicians of promoting Khalistan 'for electoral gains'. He advised Indian students in Canada to remain "aware of their surroundings". He further asked them to be aware of potential radicalisation. Verma said that extreme hard-line Khalistanis are only about 10,000 in number, and supporters amount to perhaps 1 lakh in a Sikh population of about 8 lakh. "The Khalistanis have made Khalistan into a business in Canada. In the name of Khalistan, they do human trafficking, drug trafficking, gun-running, prostitution and all," he said. He also highlighted the plight of Goldy Brar and said Canada suddenly dropped the name of gangster Brar, who operates in the North American nation, from its wanted list of criminals. Verma was declared a "person of interest" by Canada on 13 October in its investigation into Hardeep Singh Nijjar, a Canadian who has been declared a Khalistani terrorist by India. *—PTI*

*PHOTO: PTI*

## 80 FLIGHTS GET BOMB THREATS ON THURSDAY

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

More than 80 domestic and international flights of various Indian airlines received bomb threats on Thursday, according to sources.

The sources said around 20 flights each of Air India, Vistara, and IndiGo got bomb threats while Akasa Air got the threats for 13 flights. Besides, around 5 flights each of Alliance Air and SpiceJet received the threats, they added.

In 11 days, more than 250 flights operated by the Indian carriers have received bomb threats.

The government has started identifying those behind the menace and asked social media platforms such as Meta and X to share data on such messages, sources said.

The government has also asked top multinational technology conglomerates to cooperate with it in helping identifying those behind such hoax calls, saying this involves public good. *—PTI*

## Omar meets PM for J&K statehood restoration

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah, who is on his first official visit to Delhi after assuming office, called on Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday and handed over to him a resolution seeking early restoration of statehood to the union territory, officials said.

The Centre is likely to initiate the process of restoring statehood to Jammu and Kashmir over five years after the region was stripped of its statehood and special status, sources said. Omar also met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in New Delhi last evening.

During the meeting, Shah assured the centre's full support to the newly elected government, sources said.

Abdullah also handed over the resolution passed by his cabinet last week urging the central government to restore Jammu and Kashmir's statehood "in its original form", according to the officials. *—PTI*

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting, in New Delhi on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

## J&K: 4 KILLED AS TERRORISTS ATTACK ARMY VEHICLE

**SRINAGAR, 24 OCT**

Four individuals, including two soldiers and two army porters, lost their lives in a terrorist attack on an army patrol vehicle in the Gulmarg region of Jammu and Kashmir on Thursday.

The incident took place hours after terrorists shot at and injured a labourer from Uttar Pradesh in the Tral area of Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir.

This is the third attack on non-local labourers in Kashmir in the past week. Additionally, two army personnel sustained injuries and were immediately transported for medical attention. The terrorist attack occurred hours after Chief Minister Omar Abdullah met with Prime Minister Narendra Modi to present a cabinet resolution seeking the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood. *—Salar News with Agencies*

**RELIANCE DECLINES OFFER**

## *Delhi techie buys 'JioHotstar' domain for education fund*

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

A Delhi-based developer, who dreamed of studying in Cambridge, is facing allegedly facing legal action from Reliance Industries over the purchase of the domain name 'JioHotstar.com'.

The app developer bought jiohotstar.com domain hoping that once the upcoming merger between Reliance's Viacom18 and Disney+ Hotstar is finalised, Reliance will buy the domain back from him for euro 93,345. The techie planned to use the proceeds from the possible sale to fund their higher education.

The $8.5 billion merger between Viacom18 and Disney's HotStar was signed earlier this year, and is pending regulatory approvals. The deal is expected to be finalised in November, which could create one of India's biggest media and entertainment entities.

*PHOTO: X*

It is expected that once the merger is complete, the new entity will operate under a single brand name, likely JioHotstar. "When Jio acquired the music streaming service Saavn, they rebranded it to JioSaavn, and changed the domain from Saavn.com to JioSaavn.com. I thought, If they acquire Hotstar, they might rename it to JioHotstar.com," he said in an open letter, identifying himself as "Dreamer" in the signature.

The developer said that they are willing to sell the domain if Reliance can fund their dream of going to Cambridge University for higher education. The developer has addressed both Viacom and Reliance Industries to reach out to them 'with an official letter attached, stating your authorisation to purchase' the domain name. *—Salar News with Agencies*

PHOTO: X

## Miraculous escape for 2 after car falls into Bellandur lake

BENGALURU, 24 OCT

Two men narrowly escaped serious injury after the car they were traveling in fell into Bellandur Lake in Bengaluru on Wednesday. According to police, the incident occurred around 2:30am as the youths were driving from Yamaluru toward Marathahalli. The driver reportedly lost control of the vehicle, resulting in the car plunging into the lake. Both the occupants managed to exit the vehicle and swim to safety. Following the incident, the youths promptly alerted the police. Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) marshals were dispatched to the scene, and the car was subsequently recovered using a crane. —*Salar News*

## Mysore Palace Board revises entry fees amid GST changes

MYSURU, 24 OCT

The Mysore Palace Board has announced a revision in entry ticket prices for the iconic Amba Vilas Palace, effective on Thursday, due to the implementation of an 18% Goods and Services Tax (GST). This decision was made during a recent board of directors meeting. Under the new pricing structure, adult entry tickets will cost Rs 120, an increase from the previous price of Rs 100. Tickets for children aged 10 to 18 years have also risen from Rs 50 to Rs 70, while entry remains free for children under 10. Educational tour students will now pay Rs 50, and foreign visitors will be charged Rs 1,000, up from Rs 100. In a positive development for visitors, the Palace Board has eliminated separate charges for the luggage counter and slipper stand, making these services free. —*Salar News*

## Kavadi dies while bathing elephant in Bannerghatta Park

BENGALURU 24 OCT

A 20-year-old assistant to the elephant handler in Bannerghatta Biological Park drowned while bathing an elephant in the park's lake. Gopal was a member of the park's Elephant Care Unit and assisted in caring for a 10-year-old elephant named Sampath. According to park authorities, while Gopal was cleaning Sampath, the elephant suddenly ran deeper into the lake, leading to the tragic accident. Efforts to rescue Gopal were immediate, but colleagues on-site could not reach him in time. Emergency services were alerted, and a search operation was launched. After two hours, Gopal's body was recovered and sent to Victoria Hospital for a post-mortem examination. Surya Sen AV, Deputy Conservator of Forests and Executive Director of the park said that the family of will get Rs 25 lakh. —*Salar News*

## State govt to invite Obama for Belagavi legislature session

BENGALURU, 24 OCT

State government is planning to invite former US President Barack Obama to the joint session of Legislature scheduled in Belagavi from 9 to 20 December, 2024. Chief Minister Siddaramaiah will personally extend the invitation in a letter, coinciding with the Congress centenary event at Suvarna Vidhana Soudha. Besides, Law Minister HK Patil said on X that a series of events will be organised statewide under the banner 'Gandhi Bharat'. State Assembly's winter session is held annually in Belagavi, which has historical significance as the site of the National Congress session in 1924, led by Mahatma Gandhi. Obama, who has visited India twice, has previously expressed admiration for Gandhi, noting in his memoir, 'A Promised Land', how Gandhi's writings have profoundly influenced him. Congress aims to honour this connection during the celebrations. —*Salar News*

# Kin of building collapse victims to get Rs 5L each

### It collapsed due to shoddy construction, not due to rain: CM

BENGALURU, 24 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday announced an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh each to the next of kin of each deceased in a building collapse here, and said the government will bear the full medical expenses of those injured.

The incident, which claimed eight lives, was not due to the impact of rain, but owing to shoddy construction work, he said, adding, the building was constructed in a revenue layout unauthorisedly without taking any licence, and officials are being held responsible for it.

Siddaramaiah said eight people have been rescued. Three of the six injured are in a serious condition but all of them are out of danger.

Speaking to reporters after visiting the building collapse site at Babusapalya near Hennur, he said next of kin of those killed would be given an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh each—Rs 2 lakh by the Labour Department and Rs 3 lakh by the city civic body Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP).

The Chief Minister also visited the hospital where they are being treated.

The Chief Minister noted that the concerned Assistant Executive Engineer of the area has been suspended.

—*PTI*

CM Siddaramaiah visits the hospital where the building collapse victims were undergoing treatment, in Bengaluru on Thursday PHOTO: SALAR

## PM announces ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh

Bengaluru, 24 Oct

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh from Prime Minister's National Relief Fund to the next of kin of each deceased in the building collapse here. The injured would be given Rs 50,000," it stated. Eight people were killed and 13 rescued after the building collapse. —*PTI*

FIGHT IS ON

CP Yogeeshwara with CM Siddaramaiah & Dy CM DK Shivakumar during the filing of nomination, in Channapatna on Thursday PHOTO: SALAR

# Yogeeshwara files nomination for Channapatna bypoll

CHANNAPATNA, 24 OCT

Former minister CP Yogeeshwara, who joined Congress after quitting BJP, on Thursday filed his nomination as the grand old party's candidate for the November 13 Assembly bypoll from Channapatna, amid a show of strength.

He was accompanied by Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, State Congress President and Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and district in-charge Minister Ramalinga Reddy, among other party leaders. Yogeeshwara along with Siddaramaiah, Shivakumar, Reddy, former MP DK Suresh and several other Congress leaders held a roadshow in which party workers and supporters had gathered.

Channapatna bypoll is necessitated as the seat fell vacant following the election of its representative — JD(S) State President and now Union Minister HD Kumaraswamy — to Lok Sabha from Mandya parliamentary segment.

Addressing the gathering, Yogeeshwara said Siddaramaiah's presence and blessings, and Shivakumar and Suresh's support and cooperation are a "big strength" for him. "I have come before you as your candidate to join hands with Shivakumar in his efforts to develop the taluk," he said.

—*PTI*

# CM opens health scheme for non-communicable diseases

BENGALURU, 24 OCT

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday launched the "Gruha Arogya: Healthcare at Your Doorstep" initiative here, aimed at providing free health check-ups and treatment to citizens at their homes.

This scheme, a flagship programme of the Department of Health and Family Welfare for the control and management of non-communicable diseases seeks to reach underprivileged sections and ensure timely detection of diseases, officials said.

The programme has been launched for Kolar district initially and subsequently the scheme shall be scaled up to include all districts after two months, officials said.

According to the Health Department, a total budget of Rs 92.75 crore has been earmarked for this program by Karnataka government.

Approximately 63 per cent of all deaths in India are due to non-communicable diseases.

According to health department, teams comprising Community Health Officers, Primary Health Care Officers, Health Inspecting Officers, ASHAs shall carry out door to door visits in their Ayushman Arogya Mandir area for screening of major non-communicable diseases including diabetes, hypertension and three common cancers namely oral cancer, breast and cervical cancer (aimed at women) for individuals aged 30 years of age and above.

Screening shall be done on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Fridays, and Saturdays until all houses are covered. Screening for signs and symptoms of Obstructive Sleep Apnea and Mental Health Conditions will also be done. Counselling on lifestyle modification measures to prevent and control non-communicable diseases will be given to all individuals by the teams.

"Individuals who are suffering from Diabetes and Hypertension shall be provided medicines free of cost during the screening. Also, provision will be made to provide medicines for treatment of Non Communicable Diseases for senior citizens, specially abled patients and patients who are on palliative care," the Health Department said in a statement. —*PTI*

## Dense fog causes serial collision on Yelahanka flyover

BENGALURU, 24 OCT

At least seven cars were damaged in a serial collision that took place on Yelahanka flyover on Thursday morning. However, no major casualties were reported, except for a five-year-old boy who suffered a minor injury on his hand, police said.

Traffic police cleared traffic congestion and the injured were sent to a nearby hospital.

The pile-up on the flyover towards Kempegowda International Airport at 6.20am was due to the dense fog that had enveloped the area, reducing visibility. The collision also occurred after a van suddenly changed lanes and applied brakes which led to the vehicles crashing into each other on the road.

—*Salar News*

## BJP'S PUTTUR WINS BYELECTION

MANGALURU, 24 OCT

BJP candidate Kishore Kumar Puttur secured a decisive victory in the Legislative Council byelection for the Dakshina Kannada Local Authorities Constituency, the result of which was announced on Thursday. The vote counting took place on Thursay morning at St Aloysius Pre-University College in Mangaluru.

A total of 5,092 elected representatives from Udupi and Dakshina Kannada districts cast their votes in the election. Puttur won by a margin of 1,600 votes in the first-preference vote count. The byelection was held on 21 October following the election of Kota Srinivasa Poojary's election to the Lok Sabha. —*PTI*

# Traffic curbs imposed in City for Fri & Sat

BENGALURU 24 OCT

Bengaluru Traffic Police (BTP) has issued an advisory requesting the public to avoid certain roads and junctions and use alternative routes on Friday and Saturday in view of a religious event at Palace Grounds.

The event titled 'Namah Shivaya' is conducted by Sri Sri Bharati Tirtha Mahasannidhanam between 10.30am and 1.30pm on Saturday. Vice President Jagdeep Dhankar, Union Minister of Consumer Affairs Pralhad Joshi, Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar and Union Minister of State for Railways and Jal Shakti V Somanna along with other dignitaries are expected to attend the event.

**Parking restrictions**

As per the notification shared by BTP, parking of all types of vehicles will be prohibited on HAL Road, Cubbon Road, MG Road (Trinity to Mayo Hall), Rajbhavan Road and Ambedkar Veedhi from 4.15pm to 9pm on Friday.

To regulate the traffic on Ballari Road, Jayamahal Road and the area surrounding Palace Grounds, traffic police have prohibited parking of all types of vehicles from 9am to 2pm on Saturday on Rajbhavan Road, Bellary Road, Infantry Road, Cubbon Road, MG Road (Trinity to Mayo Hall) and HAL Road.

For the people visiting the event at Palace Grounds, the following arrangements have been made. Public coming by bus and Tempo Travellers should move on Jayamahal Road and park their vehicles at Circus Grounds near TV Tower. While leaving the venue, they are requested to take Jayamahal Road and exit via Mekhri Circle.

People coming by four-wheelers and two-wheelers shall move towards Gate Numbers 2, 3 or 4 and park their vehicles in designated spots. While leaving, they shall take Tripura Vasini Exit Gate and take Jayamahal Road and pass through Mekhri Circle.

Motorists going towards Palace Road can take a diversion at Mysore Bank Circle towards Vasanth Nagar Underpass. Alternative routes from LRDE junction to Hebbal can be used to reach Ballari Road.

—*Salar News*

## Prohibited zones declared around exam centres

BENGALURU, 24 OCT

Ahead of the recruitment exams for the position of Village Administration Officer, Bengaluru Police Commissioner B Dayananda announced a 200m restricted zone around all examination centres.

The written examination for Kannada Language Paper II is set for Saturday, followed by a practical examination on Sunday. In a notification issued by the police, it was stated that the prohibition will remain in effect from 7 am on Saturday until all examinations are completed.

The decision aims to ensure the smooth conduct of the exams and maintain a secure environment for all candidates. The police urge the public to cooperate with the restrictions during this period. —*Salar News*

NEW COMMUTE

Residents of Sai Layout in Bengaluru commute on a plastic door on Thursday following rain PHOTO: MOHAMMED ASAD

## Two bike riders electrocuted in Chamarajanagar

MYSURU, 24 OCT

Two bike riders lost their lives after their motorcycle came into contact with a snapped electric wire in Ayyanapura village, Chamarajanagar taluk, on Wednesday. The victims are Mallesh, 48, and Nagendra, 45, both village residents.

The incident was discovered on Thursday morning when the pair failed to return home after heading out to their agricultural fields the previous evening. The accident occurred on the road connecting Ayyanapura and Ittalagudda village.

Villagers expressed their anger over what they perceived as negligence by Chamundeshwari Electricity Supply Corporation Limited, demanding compensation for the victims' families.

—*Salar News*

# Former IAS officer testifies in MUDA scam

MYSURU, 24 OCT

Following the statement of former deputy commissioner and MP G Kumar Naik regarding the alleged MUDA scam, Lokayukta officials interrogated former IAS officer S Palaiah for nearly 2 hours on Thursday. Palaiah, who previously served as the MUDA commissioner in Mysuru, appeared before Lokayukta SP TJ Udesha at the latter's office.

Speaking to reporters, Palaiah confirmed that he was summoned to provide evidence. He noted that the Lokayukta had issued two notices for him to appear. "I answered all the questions posed to me and provided evidence related to the matter," he stated. Although he was scheduled to appear last week, he was unable to attend due to a prior commitment. —*Salar News*

HEALTH CONCERNS

# *Toxic dam spill threatens farmlands, commuters*

BENGALURU, 24 OCT

Toxic foam has appeared on roads in Tamil Nadu's Hosur, about 40km from Bengaluru, following heavy rain and water discharge from Kelavarapalli Dam. This released water has adversely affected agricultural lands along Thenpennai River, creating a foul odour.

Rescue teams cleared the foam, which reached heights of about five feet, the roads have been blocked and traffic diverted, police said.

This foam follows intermittent heavy rains in Karnataka, which have increased the outflow from Kelavarapalli Dam. The Met Department reported that Hosur received over 11cm of rainfall in the past 24 hours, raising storage levels in the nearby reservoir. The subsequent discharge into Thenpennai River has led to the inundation of nearby areas and the accumulation of toxic foam.

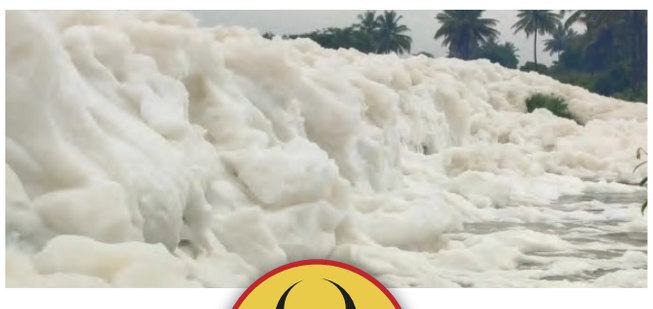


PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

There is currently no official report detailing the specific pollutants responsible for this froth. However, it is suspected that industrial units in neighbouring Karnataka may have discharged effluents into the river, taking advantage of the rainfall. Officials are investigating the exact cause.

Raghavendra B Pachhapur, a lake conservationist from Bengaluru, said water from sewage-treatment plants in the City often contains toxins, including dissolved metal particles. "This water is unsuitable for human use and harmful to animals. It is the responsibility of the states to ensure proper treatment of water before releasing it, as it affects agricultural land and both human and animal life," he said. —*Salar News*

## Range Forest Officer caught accepting bribe

MYSURU, 24 OCT

Lokayukta sleuths caught Kowdalli Range Forest Officer Kantharaj Chavan in Chamarajangar district red-handed while allegedly accepting a bribe of Rs 60,000 from a gram panchayat member on Thursday.

Kantharaj, working under the limits of MM Hills Sanctuary in Hanur taluk, has demanded Rs 80,000 bribe from Joseph Anbalagan, a member of Martalli Gram Panchayat, to give approval for lake rejuvenation at Rs 10 lakh at Morenur Hunasamare as it comes under Forest Department limits. Anbalagan had paid Rs 20,000 as a bribe advance.

In a separate case, Mysuru Lokayukta sleuths trapped Panchayat Development Officer Kulle Gowda, attached to Karpuravalli Gram Panchayat of Saligrama taluka in the district, while receiving Rs 4,000 bribe from a complainant on Thursday. Village resident Bhaskar had filed a complaint with Lokayukta against the officer for allegedly demanding Rs 5,000 bribe to issue e-khata to his property. Lokayukta sleuths led by Inspector Ashokumar and his team carried out the raid and caught the PDO red-handed in Karpuravalli.

Mysuru Lokayukta sleuths have also arrested Udbur Gram Panchayat PDO Kiran R Jagirdar for allegedly receiving a bribe of Rs 25,000 from a contractor over civil works.

—*Salar News*

## Fake WhatsApp accounts of Goa Minister goes viral

**PANAJI, 24 OCT**

Goa's Transport Minister Mauvin Godinho and BJP MLA Nilesh Cabral have been targeted by cyber fraudsters who have allegedly created their fake profiles on WhatsApp and have been asking for money from people. BJP leader Godinho said a police complaint has been lodged in connection with his fake WhatsApp account. In a post on his Facebook page late Wednesday evening, Godinho said a false message has been circulated using his name and image on WhatsApp requesting for money through an Amazon Pay e-gift card. "The message is fraudulent and I strongly condemn such malicious activities," he said. *—PTI*

## Punjab BJP leader expelled after arrest in drug case

**CHANDIGARH, 24 OCT**

The Punjab BJP on Thursday expelled party leader and former MLA Satkar Kaur for six years, a day after she was arrested in a drugs case. Punjab BJP General Secretary Anil Sarin said in a statement issued here on Thursday that Kaur has been expelled on the directions of Punjab BJP chief Sunil Jakhar. Kaur, a former Congress MLA, and her nephew Jaskeerat Singh were arrested on Wednesday for allegedly trying to peddle over 100 grams of heroin in Mohali's Kharar. Police had said a total of 128 grams heroin was recovered from the former MLA Kaur and her nephew. Kaur represented the Ferozepur Rural constituency in the Assembly from 2017-2022. But the Congress denied her a ticket in the 2022 Assembly polls after which she joined the BJP. *—PTI*

PHOTO: FACEBOOK

## Kerala govt vows justice for ADM's death

**T'PURAM, 24 OCT**

The Kerala government on Thursday said that the culprits responsible for the suicide of former Kannur ADM Naveen Babu, which has triggered a political row in the state, will not go scot-free and his family will get justice. State Revenue Minister K Rajan said that he knew Babu as an upright officer and never received a complaint about him. "I made it clear right from the start that he (Babu) was an honest officer and I stand by that view," he said. "Let me make it clear, the culprits will not escape," he said. Rajan said that Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's remarks a day ago that no official should suffer such an ill-experience in the state indicates the government's stand. *—PTI*

## Khalistani terrorist's key aide held in Delhi

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Thursday arrested a close associate of Khalistani terrorist Arshdeep Singh Dala alias Arsh Dala from the Delhi airport. Baljeet Singh alias Baljeet Maur of Bathinda, Punjab, was taken into custody by the NIA on his arrival at the Indira Gandhi International Airport from the UAE, according to an official statement. NIA have revealed that Baljeet Maur was involved in logistic support, identification of extortion targets, recruitment of new cadres, as well as terror funding to India-based associates of Arsh Dala of the proscribed outfit Khalistan Terrorist Force (KTF). Besides being wanted in a case related to terror activities of the KTF, Maur was also wanted in several other cases, the statement said. A non-bailable warrant of arrest was issued against him in June 2024, while a Look Out Circular was issued this February, it added. *—PTI*

# NCP (SP) releases first list of candidates

### Ajit, nephew Yugendra to face off at Baramati

**PUNE, 24 OCT**

The NCP (SP) on Thursday announced the candidature of Yugendra Pawar against his uncle and Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar from Baramati as the party released its first list of 45 candidates for the 20 November state Assembly elections.

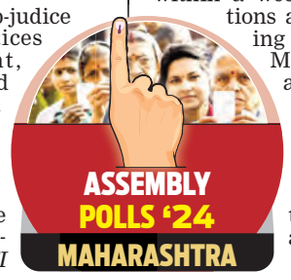
Ajit, who became President of the Nationalist Congress Party after parting ways with his uncle and party founder Sharad Pawar last year, is the sitting MLA from the Baramati Assembly constituency in Pune district. His party has already announced that Ajit would contest from his traditional seat.

Yugendra, 32, is the son of Ajit's younger brother Shrinivas Pawar. Others in the NCP (SP) list included its state chief Jayant Patil (Islampur), Jitendra Awhad (Mumbra-Kalwa), Anil Deshmukh (Katol), Harshvardhan Patil (Indapur) and late NCP politician R R Patil's son Rohit Patil who is making a debut (Tasgaon-Kavthemahankal).

Yugendra Pawar is the son of NCP President Ajit Pawar's younger brother Shrinivas Pawar *PHOTOS: X/PTI*

**Use 'clock' symbol with disclaimer: SC to Ajit**

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar to use the "clock" symbol in its publicity material in the upcoming Maharashtra Assembly elections with a disclaimer that the matter was sub-judice before it. Justices Surya Kant, Dipankar Datta and Ujjal Bhuyan passed the order on a plea filed by the rival Sharad Pawar-led faction as it issued a notice to the Ajit Pawar-led faction. *—PTI*




# HM asks not to let rebels contest polls

### Modi to campaign for elections from 5-14 Nov

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday met Maharashtra Chief Minister Eknath Shinde and his deputies Devendra Fadnavis and Ajit Pawar to iron out issues related to seat sharing for the 20 November Assembly elections.

Shah has told Ajit and Eknath to prevent Mahayuti rebels from contesting in Maharashtra elections. It is agreed that no Mahayuti party will allow rebels to stand. This directive affects all three involved parties.

The three leaders had rushed to Delhi for the second time within a week for consultations about seat sharing of the ruling Mahayuti alliance that were stalled due to differences over certain segments claimed by both the Shiv Sena and BJP.

Sources said Shah asked the alliance partners to work unitedly and strengthen the coalition to take on the rival Maha Vikas Aghadi of the Congress, NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT).

The saffron party is keen to contest more than 150 seats in a bid to emerge as the single largest party in the post poll scenario.

Union Minister Amit Shah asked the alliance partners to work unitedly and strengthen the coalition to take on the rival MVA *PHOTO: PTI*

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is set to lead a series of campaign rallies across Maharashtra. "From 5 – 14 November, Modi will hold rallies in various regions, not only to support BJP candidates but also to promote the entire Mahayuti alliance, " as per sources.

*—Agencies*

## Congress releases 1st list for M'rashtra polls

**MUMBAI, 24 OCT**

Congress on Thursday announced its first list of 48 candidates for the Maharashtra Assembly polls, fielding its state unit chief Nana Patole from Sakoli, former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan from Karad South and Leader of Opposition in the outgoing Assembly Vijay Wadettiwar from Brahmapuri.

The opposition party also fielded former ministers Nitin Raut and Balasaheb Thorat from Nagpur North and Sangamner respectively, Jyoti Eknath Gaikwad from Dharavi, Amit Deshmukh from Latur City and Dheeraj Deshmukh from Latur Rural.

Mohammad Aarif Naseem Khan has been fielded from Chandivali, Aslam Sheikh from Malad West, Ranjit Kamble from Deoli and Vikas Thakre from Nagpur West.

The list comes a day after the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) of the Congress, NCP (SP) and Shiv Sena (UBT) announced that they will contest 85 seats each in the 20 November polls.

However, deliberations to seal a final pact are still underway. The three allies are discussing the sharing of the remaining 33 seats of the total 288 among themselves and smaller parties.

Shiv Sena (UBT) MP Sanjay Raut said a consensus has been reached on 270 of the 288 seats. Patole said the remaining seats will be given to smaller parties. The ruling Mahayuti alliance comprises Eknath Shinde's Shiv Sena, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Ajit Pawar-led NCP. *—PTI*

# Buch skips PAC meeting, BJP targets chair Venugopal

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

SEBI Chairperson Madhabi Puri Buch skipped a Parliament's Public Accounts Committee meeting on Thursday, prompting panel head KC Venugopal to postpone the sitting, with NDA members accusing him of taking unilateral decisions and lodging a protest with the Lok Sabha speaker.

Venugopal told reporters that the committee received a communication from Buch at 9.30 am that she and her team will not be able to appear before the panel due to "exigencies". ."Considering a woman's request, we thought it better to postpone today's meeting for another day," Venugopal said as he along with other Opposition members left the venue minutes after the meeting began amid sharp exchanges between the ruling alliance and INDIA bloc MPs. An opposition member alleged that Buch informing the committee about her decision with less than two hours to go for the meeting to begin virtually amounts to contempt of the parliamentary panel. *—PTI*

Parliament's Public Accounts Committee (PAC) Chairman KC Venugopal (centre) with other committee members, in New Delhi *PHOTO: PTI*

## Cabinet approves ₹6,798cr firms to boost connectivity

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

The Union Cabinet on Thursday approved two rail projects worth Rs 6,798 crore - a 57-km-long line to connect Andhra Pradesh's new capital Amravati and for doubling of a section in north Bihar.

He added that this ambitious project will provide connectivity from Amravati to all metros including Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata.

The Cabinet also approved the doubling of the Narkatiaganj-Raxaul-Sitamarhi-Darbhanga and Sitamarhi-Muzaffarpur section in Bihar covering 256 km. Both these projects will mainly benefit Andhra Pradesh and Bihar in which the BJP is in alliance with the TDP and the JDU respectively. *—PTI*

## READY FOR BATTLE

Clockwise from top left: Shiv Sena's (UBT) Aditya Thackeray with father and party chief Uddhav Thackeray and mother Rashmi Thackeray files nomination papers on Thursday; Sangli candidate Sudheer Gadgil with Union Minister Murlidhar Mohol; Jharkhand's JMM candidate from Gandey constituency Kalpana Soren; JMM candidate from Barhait constituency Hemant Soren *PHOTOS: PTI*

## Congress not to field candidates for UP bypolls

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

The Congress announced on Thursday that it would not field candidates in the nine Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh where bypolls are being held and would support INDIA bloc nominees.

Addressing a press conference at the AICC headquarters here along with the Congress' Uttar Pradesh chief Ajay Rai, AICC General Secretary Avinash Pande said party workers and leaders would unconditionally work to ensure the victory of Samajwadi Party candidates or that of other INDIA bloc parties.

BJP announced its candidates for eight of the nine Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh where bypolls will be held on 13 November, leaving one seat for its ally the Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD).

BJP also released its list of candidates for Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh Assembly bypolls. For Rajasthan bypolls, BJP has fielded Karilal Nanoma from Chorasi (ST) seat. BSP on Thursday announced candidates for eight of the nine Assembly seats in Uttar Pradesh.

The Rashtriya Loktantrik Party announced it will field Kanika Beniwal as its candidate from the Khinwsar Assembly constituency. In a setback to the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) ahead of the bypolls in Punjab, senior party leader Sohan Singh Thandal joined BJP. SAD said it will not contest the bypolls.

SP also announced two more candidates. In Assam, AAP announced that it will contest two seats in the bypolls naming its candidates for Behali and Samaguri constituencies. *—PTI*

## J&K Oct attack: CCTV captures terrorist's image

**SRINAGAR, 24 OCT**

A CCTV grab of a Pheran-clad terrorist allegedly involved in the Gagangir attack in Jammu and Kashmir has emerged here but investigators said they are yet to ascertain if the AK rifle-wielding assailant carried out the 20 October assault that left seven dead.

The ultra could be seen entering a prefabricated hut, believed to be at the Gagangir tunnel construction site -- where seven people including six non-local labourers -- were killed in the terror attack, sources said.

The screen grab has 'January 27' as the date stamp -- which sources said could be due to a settings or technical issue -- in the top right corner while the rifle carried by the terrorist has a blue marking on the muzzle. Such rifles have been reportedly used by terrorists in attacks on security forces in the Pir Panjal region, which is about 200 km from the site of attack.

PHOTO: SCREENGRAB

They said the terrorist was not covering his face but the survivors of the attack had claimed the assailants had their faces covered. Meanwhile, Terrorists shot at and injured a labourer from Uttar Pradesh in the Tral area of Pulwama district of Jammu and Kashmir Thursday morning, officials said. Shubam Kumar, a resident of Bijnore, received a gunshot injury in the arm when the terrorists fired at him at Batagund village, the officials said.

They said Kumar has been rushed to a hospital for treatment.This is a third attack on non-local labourers in the past one week. *—PTI*

## EASES TENSION

# *'Modi-Xi meet significant for improving ties'*

**BEIJING, 24 OCT**

China on Thursday said the meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Russia's Kazan on Wednesday carries a "great significance" as they reached an "important common understanding" to improve the bilateral ties.

"They reached important common understandings on improving and developing China-India relations and set the course to steer bilateral relations back on the path of steady development", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Lin Jian told a media briefing here.

Replying to a question on how Beijing viewed the outcome of the meeting, Lin said, China stands ready to work with India to view and handle the bilateral relations from a strategic height and long-term perspective.

China is also ready to step up communication and cooperation, enhance strategic mutual trust, properly handle differences, and bring bilateral relations back to the path of steady development as soon as possible, Lin said.

Modi and Xi, who met on the sidelines of the BRICS summit at Kazan, endorsed Monday's India-China agreement on patrolling and disengagement along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

Following it, directions were issued to revive various bilateral dialogue mechanisms, signalling attempts to normalise ties that were hit by a deadly military clash in 2020.

Asked about a Chinese official media report stating that "Modi made suggestions on improving and developing the relationship, which Xi agreed to in principle", Lin said "both sides were of the view that this meeting is constructive and carries great significance".

The two sides agreed to strengthen communication and cooperation, enhance strategic mutual trust by holding talks between their foreign ministers and officials at various levels to bring the relationship back to steady development at an early date, he added.

*—PTI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi meets Chinese President Xi Jinping on the sidelines of the 16th BRICS Summit, in Kazan, Russia *PHOTO: PTI*

**"You can't ignore India. Also, the geopolitical neighbourhood in which we live. No country, the US, or China, which is very close to us, can ignore us**

-Nirmala Sitaraman, Union Finance Minister

PHOTO: PTI

## Rlys to run 7,000 trains for Diwali, Chhath Pooja

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

The Indian Railways will run 7,000 special trains for Diwali and Chhath Pooja this year to facilitate two lakh extra passengers daily, Railway Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw said at a press briefing here on Thursday. According to railway officials, 4,500 special trains were run during Diwali and Chhath Puja last year to cater to the festive rush. Considering the increase in passengers' footfall, the ministry has decided to enhance the services this year, the officials said. The Northern Railway (NR) will operate a substantial number of trains as a lot of passengers travel to the eastern parts of the country during this period. *—PTI*

## Grenade goes off in Baramulla court evidence room

**SRINAGAR, 24 OCT**

A policeman was injured in an explosion in the evidence room of a court in Jammu and Kashmir's Baramulla district, officials said on Thursday. "A grenade (collected as evidence in a case) exploded inside the 'malkhana (evidence room)' of a court in Baramulla town on Thursday," a police official said. One policeman was injured in the explosion and he was taken to a hospital, he said. *—PTI*

## AP announces 3% hike in DA for regular employees

**ITANAGAR, 24 OCT**

The Arunachal Pradesh government has announced a 3 per cent increase in Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for its regular employees and pensioners, respectively, with effect from 1 July. There are 68,818 regular employees in the northeastern state. With the revision, the DA and DR will rise from 50 per cent to 53 per cent, providing enhanced financial support. Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein announced the hike on Wednesday. Mein, who also holds the finance, planning and investment portfolios, in a statement said that the decision to enhance the DA and DR aligns with the Centre's policy and aims to benefit state government employees, all India service officers serving in the state, central government employees on deputation in the state, as well as pensioners and their families. Additionally, the House Rent Allowance (HRA) has been increased to 30 per cent, 20 and 10 per cent, for various categories of towns. The total financial implication of the decision is estimated at Rs 63.92 crore from July 2024 to March 2025.*—PTI*

## TN students buy chemical to make drugs in own 'lab'

**CHENNAI, 24 OCT**

A post graduate student in chemistry and four engineering students, with the help of two others, came together to manufacture methamphetamine and market it and they were arrested before they could succeed in their attempt, police said on Thursday. While they tried to make the drug in a makeshift 'lab,' set up in the residence of one of the seven students here, they made their parents believe that they were involved in academic research. They procured the main chemical compounds that go into the making of methamphetamine under the guise of academic research and had managed to raise about Rs 3 lakh for the purpose of procurement. Based on a tip-off, narcotics intelligence sleuths arrested the seven men which includes five students aged between 21 and 23 besides two others and one of them was 38-year-old. *—PTI*

# SC junks contempt plea against 3 states

### Says Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand did not defy demolition orders

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Supreme Court on Thursday refused to entertain a plea alleging contempt of its order on demolition of properties by the authorities in Uttarakhand, Rajasthan and Uttar Pradesh.

A bench of Justices B R Gavai, P K Mishra and K V Viswanathan said it was not inclined to entertain the plea filed by the petitioner who was not directly or indirectly related to the alleged act.

"We don't want to open a pandora's box," said the bench, adding, "Let the people who are affected by demolition come to the court".

The petitioner's counsel alleged the authorities in Haridwar, Jaipur and Kanpur had demolished properties in contempt of the apex court's order which had said demolition would not be carried out without its permission.

"The Supreme Court's order was categorical that without the leave of this court, no demolition would be carried out," the counsel said.

The petitioner's counsel alleged the authorities in Haridwar, Jaipur and Kanpur had demolished properties *PHOTO: PTI*

He alleged in one of these cases, the property was demolished soon after an FIR was lodged.

Additional Solicitor General K M Nataraj, appearing for the Uttar Pradesh government, said the petitioner was a third party and not aware of the facts as it was only a footpath encroachment that was removed by the authorities.

He said the petitioner had moved court on the basis of some media reports.

The bench observed refused to entertain the plea observing the petitioner was not directly or indirectly affected by the action.

The petitioner's counsel said in two of the three cases, the affected persons were in jail.

The bench, however, noted the family members of affected persons, who were in jail, could approach the court.

The top court said if somebody's property had been demolished, they could approach the court and the bench would hear it.

The apex court had on 17 September ordered no demolition will take place across the country till 1 October without its permission.

On 1 October, the apex court had reserved its verdict in the matter saying until further orders, its 17 September interim order would operate.

It had then suggested framing of pan-India guidelines on the demolition of properties and said religious structures in the middle of a road -- be it a 'dargah' (shrine) or a temple -- had to go as public interest was paramount. *—PTI*

## SC to hear ex-Jharkhand CM's plea today

Supreme Court will hear on Friday a plea moved by former Jharkhand chief minister Madhu Koda, seeking a stay on his conviction in a coal scam case, to enable him to contest the upcoming state Assembly polls. Koda was convicted in December 2017 under the anti-corruption law in a case relating to the allotment of a coal block to a Kolkata-based Vini Iron and Steel Limited during his tenure as chief minister.

## SC says no action against booked scribe

Supreme Court directed for no coercive steps against a journalist four FIRs registered against her in Uttar Pradesh. The bench issued a notice to Uttar Pradesh seeking its response on a petition filed by journalist Mamta Tripathi, who sought the FIRs to be quashed. Tripathi claimed the FIRs were politically motivated filed with an attempt to stifle the freedom of press. According to Tripathi, the FIRs were in relation to certain tweets.

Farmers block the Dhareri Jatta toll plaza and stage a protest on Rajpura Road, Patiala, on Thursday *PHOTO: PTI*

## Farmers to block roads in Punjab over paddy row

**CHANDIGARH, 24 OCT**

Kisan Mazdoor Morcha (KMM) leader Sarwan Singh Pandher on Thursday said farmers will resort to a road blockade at a few places in Punjab for an indefinite period from 26 October to protest against the "tardy" paddy procurement and other issues.

Pandher said the "chakka jam" for an indefinite period will be held at one place each in Sangrur and Moga districts and at Phagwara and Batala.

He told reporters here that the farmers will protest against the "tardy" paddy procurement and lifting, the DAP fertiliser supplies not being adequate, besides over the stubble-burning issue.

He said "red entries" have been made in the farm records of farmers burning stubble and cases slapped on them.

"These four points will be blocked for an indefinite period. We can block entire Punjab, but we still want to give time to the government.... Otherwise we will be forced to fight a do-or-die battle," the farmer leader said.

Pandher, who was talking to reporters here, during which some leaders of the Samyukta Kisan Morcha (Non-Political) were also present, blamed the Punjab government as well as the BJP-led Centre for the farmers' plight. Paddy lifting from "mandis" (wholesale markets) in Punjab is hit after the state rice millers refused to mill the paddy till their demands were met. *—PTI*

**NDRF DEPLOYED**

# 3.5L evacuated from WB & 1.7L in Odisha ahead of Dana

**BHUBANESWAR/ KOLKATA, 24 OCT**

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said that the administration identified over 3.5 lakh people to be evacuated from low-lying areas of the state in the wake of the approaching cyclone Dana.

Urging people to take precautionary measures and cooperate with the administration and the police, she said 2,43,374 people have taken shelter in camps.

Mamata said that she would be staying the entire Thursday night at the state secretariat and personally monitor the situation.

The chief secretary and home secretary would also be monitoring the situation from their respective residences and rejoin her on Friday morning.

She said that a 24X7 helpline (2214 3526) and some associated phone numbers have been made functional for monitoring and sharing information.

The Bengal CM said that the educational institutions were closed down to ensure the safety of the students.

People have been urged to take precautionary measures and cooperate with the administration and the police *PHOTO: PTI*

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) Deputy Inspector General Mohsen Shahedi on Thursday said that 20 teams are deployed in Odisha and 17 teams in West Bengal in preparation for severe cyclonic storm Dana's landfall.

He also said that more than 1 lakh 70 thousand people who are in affected areas of Odisha have been evacuated.

In Bengal, more than 170 express and passenger trains running through South Eastern Railway (SER) jurisdiction have been cancelled, an official said.

The trains cancelled were scheduled to depart from their originating stations between 23 October and 27 October, he said.

The Kolkata-headquartered SER zone is spread across West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand.

Besides, the Eastern Railway (ER) will not operate any EMU local train from Sealdah station on its south and Hasnabad sections from 8 pm on Thursday till 10 am on Friday, the official said. *—PTI*

## HC stops Customs from destroying seized artwork

**MUMBAI, 24 OCT**

The Bombay High Court has restrained until further orders the Customs department from destroying artworks by renowned artists FN Souza and Akbar Padamsee seized last year on the ground of being "obscene material".

A division bench of Justices MS Sonak and Jitendra Jain on Monday reserved its order on a petition filed by a firm, BK Polimex India Pvt Ltd, owned by City-based businessman and art connoisseur Mustafa Karachiwala.

The petitioner claimed the impugned order confiscating the artworks, which had been acquired by him, was arbitrary and illegal and deserves to be quashed.

The plea said the seized goods order contained artworks of renowned artists Souza and Padamsee, who have been awarded prestigious awards by the Indian government.

"The subject work of art is a national treasure of modern art which needs to be given its due recognition. However, the Customs officials have failed to understand the significance of the art and failed to differentiate between art and obscenity," the plea said.

It said the order for seizing the artwork was violative of fundamental rights. *—PTI*

**CAPITAL CHOKES**

# Air quality in Delhi remains poor

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Delhi on Thursday continued to grapple with rising pollution as the air quality index settled in the 'very poor' category in most areas of the city

The Air Quality Index (AQI) was recorded at 328 at 9 am with a thick layer of smog shrouding the city in the morning hours, according to the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB).

Air quality is classified under four different stages: Stage I 'Poor' (AQI 201-300); Stage II 'Very Poor' (AQI 301-400); Stage III 'Severe' (AQI 401-450); and Stage IV 'Severe Plus' (AQI>450).

Dwarka, Rohini, DTU, IGI Airport (T3), ITO, Mundka, Narela, Patparganj, Shadipur, Sonia Vihar, Wazirpur, Alipur, Ashok Vihar, Aya Nagar, Burari, Mandir Marg, Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium, Najafgarh and Nehru Nagar were among 24 areas of the national capital where the AQI was recorded in the 'very poor' category on Wednesday and Thursday morning.

People play cricket near Taj Mahal amid smog, in Agra *PHOTO: PTI*

During the winter months, Delhi experiences severe pollution. *—PTI*

## Kerala GST seizes 104 kg of unaccounted gold

**THRISSUR, 24 OCT**

In a major operation targeting gold jewellery manufacturing units in Thrissur, known for its gold trade, officials from the Kerala Goods and Services Tax (GST) department have seized 104 kg of unaccounted gold valued at around Rs 75 crore.

This operation, dubbed 'Torre del Oro', is regarded as one of the largest of its kind in the state. The name was adopted from a Spanish word that means 'Tower of Gold'.

The operation commenced on Wednesday evening and continued into Thursday, involving over 700 officials who inspected around 78 locations, including both manufacturing facilities and the homes of jewellers throughout the central Kerala district.

Officers said the Intelligence wing of the state GST Department has been conducting a probe into the alleged GST fraud by jewellery manufacturers over the past six months. According to official sources, officials found significant irregularities in billing and taxation processes, in addition to the seizure of 104kg of gold. Earlier, the sources said that 120kg of unaccounted gold was seized during the raids. *—PTI*

*PHOTO: PTI*

## PRIEST ARRESTED FOR DRUGGING, RAPING MINORS

**BULANDSHAHR, 24 OCT**

An elderly 'sevadar' of a satsang bhawan of a village here has been arrested for raping two girls multiple times, police said on Thursday.

The accused used to give the girls some medicine, which would cause them to fall unconscious.

The matter came to light after one of the girls became pregnant, police sources said.

Additional Superintendent of Police (City) Shankar Prasad said Mohan Lal, 75, who worked as a 'sevadar' at a satsang bhawan in the Syana police station area, raped two girls, both aged 13 and residents of the same village. *—PTI*

## HC seeks Centre's reply on resale of concert tickets

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Delhi High Court on Thursday sought the response of the Centre on a plea seeking a regulatory framework to regulate the resale of concert tickets through authorised platforms and avoid illegal selling activities.

The bench issued notice to Union Ministries of Information and Broadcasting and Electronics, and Information Technology, private entities Stubhub Inc, Viagogo Entertainment Inc and Bigtree Entertainment Pvt Ltd on the petition.

]]]\The court said the replies would have to be filed within four weeks and posted the hearing on 18 February, 2025.

The petition further sought a direction to the Centre to block unlawful online platforms involved in the purported illegal and unauthorised sale of tickets in India.

The plea said the online ticketing platforms such as BookmyShow (BMS) ought to provide a convenient digital ticketing solution to the public and help keep a check on black-marketing and unauthorised sale of tickets. It said Coldplay had partnered with BMS for sale of its concert tickets and had announced it to the public to avoid any unauthorised sale of its tickets but other platforms too had gone live with the illegal and unauthorised sale of tickets. It said Bigtree Entertainment Pvt Ltd, which owns BMS, ought to implement safeguards to prevent repeated wide-spread unauthorised sale of tickets to avoid the ticket "bots" from securing large number of tickets to be sold in an unauthorised manner. *—PTI*

## 5 WORKERS KILLED AS WATER TANK COLLAPSES IN PUNE

**PUNE, 24 OCT**

Five labourers were killed and five others suffered injuries after a makeshift water tank collapsed at a labour camp in Maharashtra's Pune district on Thursday morning, police said.

The incident took place in Bhosari area of Pimpri Chinchwad township when some labourers were taking bath under the water tank, they said. "It seems a wall of the water tank exploded due to the water pressure, leading to the collapse of the tank," Pimpri Chinchwad's Additional Commissioner of Police Vasant Pardeshi said.

The labourers who were below the water tank got trapped under the debris, he said. *—PTI*

**'RADICAL CHANGES'**

# *SC Bar flays changes in Lady Justice*

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

In a unanimous resolution, the Supreme Court Bar Association has raised objections to the "radical changes" made to the statue of Lady Justice and the top court's emblem without consultation with the Bar.

Supreme Court of India has a new 'Lady Justice' - a six-foot-tall sculpture in the judges' library holding scales in one hand and the Constitution in the other sans the sword.

Dressed in white traditional attire, the 'Goddess of Justice' is without her blindfold and sword. She is also wearing a crown on her head. The resolution, signed by Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president Kapil Sibal and other members of the executive committee, has also objected to a proposed museum at a location where they had demanded a cafe cum lounge for the members of the Bar. "Now a museum has apparently been proposed in the erstwhile judges' library whereas we had demanded a library, cafe cum lounge for the members of the Bar as the present cafeteria is inadequate to cater to the needs of the members of the Bar. We are concerned that despite our objection raised against the proposed museum in the erstwhile judges' library, work has started for the museum," the resolution stated. The origin of 'Lady Justice' can be traced to both history and mythology, and is commonly associated with the Greek goddess of justice, Justitia. While the blindfold over her eyes denoted impartiality and fairness, the sword signified the might of law.

*PHOTO: PTI*

There are several sculptures and paintings of 'Lady Justice' across the world but not all depict her with a blindfold. The blindfold, scholars have claimed, was a subsequent addition to her visual symbolism. *—PTI*

## VISUAL TREAT

Beaches in Chennai, recently transformed into a breathtaking natural phenomenon, as bioluminescent waves illuminated the coastline, leaving both residents and tourists in awe. The radiant blue glow along the East Coast Road beach was captured in videos that quickly went viral, flooding social media with mesmerising visuals
***PHOTO: X***

# LOCAL EMISSIONS NOW FUEL DELHI AIR POLLUTION

Delhi's roads are choked with over a million registered vehicles and this number continues to grow each year
***PHOTO: LINKEDIN***

Delhi's air quality has become a recurring concern, especially as the winter months set in, bringing with them an increasing sense of dread about the smog that blankets the capital. This year is no different and the worsening air quality is again making headlines.

While stubble burning in nearby states has long been blamed for the seasonal spike in pollution, the reality is far more complex. Local sources within the city, particularly vehicular emissions, play an equally significant— if not greater — role in Delhi's air pollution. To effectively combat this crisis, solutions must address both regional and local contributors.

Delhi's annual average PM2.5 concentration in 2023 was an alarming 101 micrograms per cubic metre, far exceeding the national standard of 40 micrograms per cubic metre. While this marks a 7 per cent improvement from 2019, there's still a long way to go before the city can meet acceptable air quality standards.

Between 15 September and 21 October, Delhi experienced six "very poor" air quality days, compared to just three during the same period in 2023. As winter sets in, with its cold temperatures and stagnant air, these numbers are expected to rise further, highlighting the severity of the pollution crisis.

For years, stubble burning in neighbouring states like Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh has been a major focus of the debate surrounding Delhi's air quality. While it contributes to the pollution levels, the share of stubble burning in the current crisis has declined. NASA's Visible Infrared Imaging Radiometer Suite (VIIRS) data indicated a 51 per cent drop in the total number of farm fires between 2018 and mid-October 2024.

In Punjab, the largest contributor, the number of farm fires has reduced significantly from its peak in 2020.

This year, between October 12 and 21 October, on average stubble burning accounted for only 0.92 per cent of the PM2.5 levels in Delhi, an analysis of the data shared by the Indian Institute of Tropical Meteorology (IITM) showed. This indicated that while farm fires still play a role, they are no longer the dominant factor.

So, if not stubble burning alone, what else is making Delhi's air unbreathable? The answer lies within the city itself. A closer look at the sources of pollution revealed that local contributors, especially the transport sector, are responsible for a significant portion of the particulate matter polluting Delhi's air.

Data from 12 to 21 October indicated that over half of the city's PM2.5 pollution comes from vehicles. Delhi's roads are choked with over a million registered vehicles and this number continues to grow each year.

The city's public transport system, though extensive, has not kept pace with the expanding population and economic activity, leading to an increased reliance on private vehicles, which worsens the city's air quality.

This is compounded by other local sources, including construction dust, industrial emissions, and the open burning of waste, which further contribute to the city's high PM2.5 concentrations.

These factors, especially during the colder months when pollutants remain trapped closer to the ground, contribute heavily to the toxic air that residents are forced to breathe.

Further, regional contributors such as industries and vehicles from neighbouring states like Haryana and Uttar Pradesh play a substantial role, as wind patterns transport pollutants into Delhi. This trans-boundary pollution adds an additional layer of complexity to an already challenging problem.

Delhi's air pollution requires both local and regional solutions. Tackling individual issues like stubble burning or placing the burden solely on neighbouring states won't be enough. A multi-pronged approach is necessary, focusing on key contributors such as vehicular, industrial and waste-related emissions.

To reduce vehicle emissions, Delhi must accelerate its shift towards electric vehicles and expand public transportation. Measures like better traffic management, carpooling incentives and congestion pricing can also lower emissions. Stricter controls on construction dust and cleaner industrial practices are essential, while bans on open waste burning need better enforcement alongside improved waste management systems.

Regional cooperation with Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab is crucial, as cross-border pollution impacts Delhi's air quality. A co-ordinated air pollution management plan across the NCR, combined with local interventions like cleaner transportation and better construction practices, can be beneficial.

*—DowntoEarth*

SALAR سالار

**WORLD POLIO DAY**

# Conflict & vaccine shortage hinder polio eradication

As the world observed World Polio Day on 24 October, the fight to eradicate polio continues to face challenges, particularly from vaccine-derived polioviruses. According to the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 74 outbreaks of circulating vaccine-derived polioviruses (cVDPVs) were detected across 39 countries between January 2023 and June 2024. The persistence of these outbreaks underline the challenges of combating polio, even as global efforts intensify.

The transition from the trivalent oral poliovirus vaccine to the bivalent form was intended to reduce the risk of vaccine-derived poliovirus type 2 (cVDPV2) outbreaks, but the virus remains a concern.

The CDC found that 47 of the 74 outbreaks were newly detected, affecting 30 countries. These outbreaks led to 672 confirmed cases of acute flaccid paralysis, a severe symptom of polio. Countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria continue to see high transmission rates of cVDPV2, compounded by security issues and delays in vaccination campaigns.

Efforts to stop cVDPV transmission have shown mixed results. While progress has been made in controlling cVDPV type 1 (cVDPV1), particularly in Madagascar and Mozambique, the type 2 strain remains problematic. The novel oral poliovirus vaccine type 2 (nOPV2), which was introduced as a safer and more stable alternative to the original vaccine, has faced supply shortages, hindering response efforts in multiple countries.

The virus has continued to spread across borders, with Nigeria and Somalia acting as key regions from which cVDPV2 has spread to neighbouring countries.

According to the CDC, several factors have contributed to the persistence of cVDPV2 outbreaks, including poor-quality vaccination campaigns and gaps in surveillance. Many of the affected areas are hard to reach due to conflict, displacement and logistical challenges, making it difficult to vaccinate children in these regions.

Countries struggling with polio outbreaks need to prioritise resources and strengthen their vaccination efforts, especially in vulnerable and high-risk areas. Enhanced surveillance, increased laboratory capacity for genomic sequencing and better response coordination are also necessary to track and contain new outbreaks effectively.

The World Health Organization (WHO) reported that in 2023, 83 per cent of infants globally received three doses of the polio vaccine, a key measure in preventing the spread of both wild and vaccine-derived polioviruses.

However, coverage rates vary significantly by region, with the WHO European Region achieving 89 per cent coverage, while the South-East Asia Region lags behind with only 6 per cent coverage. Such disparities highlight the importance of sustained global efforts to ensure that all children, particularly those in vulnerable countries, are vaccinated.

The ongoing threat of polio remains concentrated in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the only two countries where wild poliovirus transmission has not been stopped. Until the virus is eradicated in these countries, the risk of polio spreading to other regions remains high, especially in countries with weak public health infrastructure or low vaccination coverage.

The importation of poliovirus from endemic regions continues to pose a risk to global health, underscoring the need for vigilance and cooperation across borders.

Adding to the complexity of polio eradication efforts, the recent postponement of a polio vaccination campaign in northern Gaza due to ongoing conflict illustrates the challenges health authorities face in conflict zones. The Polio Technical Committee for Gaza, which includes the Palestinian Ministry of Health, WHO, United Nations Children's Fund or UNICEF and other partners, was forced to delay the third phase of a vaccination drive scheduled for 23 October.

Intense bombardments by Israel, mass displacements and unsafe conditions have prevented families from accessing vaccination centres and health workers from safely operating in the region. The campaign, which aimed to vaccinate over 119,000 children, had already completed its first phase in September 2024. However, without safe humanitarian corridors, many children in northern Gaza remain unvaccinated, increasing the risk of polio outbreaks in an already vulnerable population.

The WHO in August 2024 announced it was sending over a million doses of polio vaccine to the war-torn region after the virus was discovered in wastewater samples from Khan Younis and Deir al-Balah.

*—DowntoEarth*

The ongoing threat of polio remains concentrated in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the only two countries where wild poliovirus transmission has not been stopped
***PHOTO: UNICEF***

**LETTERS** write to us at salarenglishdigital@gmail.com

# *US polls: Voters trust Kamala on a number of issues. But will it sway votes?*

US Vice President Kamala Harris leads Republic nominee Trump on abortion, election integrity, climate change, taxes for the middle class and management of natural disasters
***PHOTO: X/VICEPRESIDENTKAMALAHARRIS***

If the presidential election hinged on abortion or climate change, Kamala Harris might be feeling pretty comfortable about her chances on 5 November, based on the polls.

The Democratic nominee is also competitive on economic issues against Republican Donald Trump.

But Harris knows this is an extremely tight race — and that it could well serve as a test of just how much policy matters to voters, and which policies ultimately matter the most.

The Vice President leads Trump on abortion, election integrity, climate change, taxes for the middle class and management of natural disasters, according to the latest survey by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs.

She's essentially split with Trump on several specific economic issues such as jobs and the cost of groceries and gasoline. The two are basically even as well on crime and the situation in the Middle East. Trump has a slight advantage over Harris on tariffs, and a bigger edge on immigration.

Despite Harris' advantage on a number of issues, her campaign still has plenty of anxiety about a historically close race. It's a sign that policy can matter — but it doesn't always outshine issues like personality, partisan loyalty or even demographic factors that shape voters' identities.

The latest polling marks something of a shift from 2020, when the pandemic was the top priority for many voters. But it also shows that Trump can no longer claim the economy as a relative strength for his candidacy, as it was when President Joe Biden was still in the race. How voters think about the economy could prove decisive; a September AP-NORC poll identified that as the top issue for many voters.

The Harris campaign, in its own polling, finds that the Democratic nominee is competitive against Trump on the economy, and sees that as a reflection of how she's emphasised the middle class in her speeches and advertising.

"She outperforms Trump very significantly on understanding the needs of middle class and working families," said Molly Murphy, a Harris campaign pollster. "Voters tend to trust that if you talk about something relentlessly that you care about it."

Xiaowen Xu, a psychologist at the College of William & Mary, stressed that there are many factors at play when understanding people's political leanings.

"Some will place more emphasis on policy, whereas others just have it as a check box' so to speak," Xu said. "And factors like personality differences, political identity, strength of political leaning, media consumption ... all can contribute to how policy-related info is digested."

Biden experienced this disconnect firsthand before exiting the race. His aides would point to data suggesting that he bettered Trump on policy specifics, yet he still rated poorly on the economy due to the impact of inflation spiking in 2022 as well as doubts about his age. The policy edge was insufficient to boost his popularity. Trump has leaned into his persona as a property tycoon. He claimed at a recent roundtable that Harris' time as San Francisco's district attorney ruined the city and that he understands this because "I own property there." Trump had a 45 per cent to 37 per cent advantage on immigration in October's poll, roughly in line with his edge in the September and August polling. And it's an issue that was particularly important to GOP voters during their primaries earlier this year, with Trump pledging mass deportations of immigrants without authorised status. "Americans trust President Trump to get our economy back on track because he is a businessman with a proven track record of economic success from his first term in the White House," said Karoline Leavitt, the Trump campaign's national press secretary.

Trump has gone after Harris on various issues such as her 2019 call to ban fracking (which she has since disowned) and her willingness that same year to cut funding for US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (she has since called for more funding on border security). He has also attacked her support for transgender rights and the meandering answers she has given at times to interview questions. "I think she's narrowed a lot of advantages that Trump had earlier in the year, but it seems like some of the attacks on her are taking a toll," said Patrick Ruffini, a Republican strategist who says that persuadable voters still appear to prefer Trump on issues like the economy and immigration.

Ruffini noted that Harris and her Democratic surrogates are increasingly focused on Trump's own foibles, such as claims by former aides that he's a fascist, his sometimes rambling speeches and the limits of his campaign schedule. That suggests that Harris knows there's a greater advantage to attacking Trump than promoting policy.

Ads run by groups backing Harris have featured voters who ditched Trump because they saw him as caring more about tax cuts for billionaires than the middle class. Other ads go after Trump's tariffs for increasing expenses for everyday people, messages all designed to suggest that the former president prioritizes himself.

The Democratic nominee has called for USD 25,000 in down payment assistance for first-time homebuyers, expanded tax breaks for parents, new benefits to encourage more start-ups, and the doubling of registered apprenticeships to bolster blue-collar work. Her campaign has proposed high taxes on corporations and the wealthy to cover the costs of her programs without adding to projected budget deficits.

"These things do resonate," said Steven Durlauf, an economist at the University of Chicago. "There are really stark differences between the candidates."

*—PTI*

## Blinken in Doha to discuss Gaza ceasefire with Qatar

DOHA, 24 OCT

US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was in Doha on Thursday to meet with Qatari officials who have been key mediators for Hamas, as the US struggles to break the logjam of ceasefire negotiations between Israel and the militant group. Blinken is on his 11th trip to the Middle East since the start of the Israel-Hamas war. Meanwhile, the Lebanese military said Thursday an Israeli strike killed three of its troops, including an officer, as they were evacuating wounded people in southern Lebanon, and French President Emmanuel Macron said his country will provide a 100 million-euro ($108 million) aid package to support Lebanon. The Israel-Hamas war began after Hamas-led militants on Oct 7, 2023, blew holes in Israel's security fence and stormed in, killing some 1,200 people — mostly civilians — and abducting 50 others. —*PTI*

PHOTO: AP

## Pakistan reports 40th polio case this year

ISLAMABAD, 24 OCT

Pakistan has reported its 40th polio case this year, with a child from Kohat district in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa contracting the Type-I of the poliovirus, according to a report by ARY News, citing National Institutes of Health (NIH) sources. This case marks the second polio diagnosis in Kohat, bringing the total count to 40 nationwide. According to NIH sources, a two-and-a-half-year-old child belonging to Dara Adamkhel has been affected with Type-I of the poliovirus. Earlier this month, another child was diagnosed with the virus. Meanwhile, Pakistan is set to launch a nationwide polio vaccination drive to immunise over 4.5 million children across the country tomorrow. —*ANI*

## Security forces kill 9 militants in Pakistan

PESHAWAR, 24 OCT

Pakistani security forces killed nine terrorists, including two suicide bombers and a "high-value" terrorist, during an operation in the country's restive Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, the military said on Thursday. The intelligence-based operation was conducted late on Wednesday in the Bajaur district of the province, according to the military's media wing, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). After a fierce gunbattle, the law enforcement agency personnel killed nine terrorists. Among those killed were two suicide bombers and a terrorist ring leader who was a high-value target, the ISPR statement said, adding that the slain militants remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the security forces and civilians. —*PTI*

## Bangladesh bans student wing of Hasina's party

DHAKA, 24 OCT

Bangladesh interim government on Wednesday banned Bangladesh Chatra League, the student organization of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's party Awami League, after a demand by a student group that led the July-August uprising. The government, under the powers provided in sub-section (1) of Section 18 of the "Anti-Terrorism Act 2009", banned Bangladesh Awami League's fraternal organization "Bangladesh Chatra League", said the Bangladesh Home Ministry in an official order. A copy of the order was obtained by ANI. Earlier on Tuesday, the Anti-discrimination Student Movement, the group-led to oust Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, announced a five-point demands, including the resignation of Bangladesh President, Mohammed Shahabuddin. —*ANI*

# Israeli strikes pound Lebanon

Smoke rises from buildings hit in an Israeli airstike in Tyre, Lebanon **PHOTO: PTI**

## At least 5 injured as 120 rockets from Lebanon target North Israel

TYRE, 24 OCT

Israeli jets struck multiple buildings in Lebanon's southern coastal city of Tyre on Wednesday, sending up large clouds of black smoke, while Hezbollah confirmed that a top official widely expected to be the militant group's next leader had been killed in an Israeli strike. Reportedly, an Israeli strike on the nearby town of Maarakeh killed three people. There were no reports of casualties in Tyre, where the Israeli military had issued evacuation warnings prior to the strikes.

Hezbollah meanwhile fired another barrage of rockets into Israel, including two that set off air raid sirens in Tel Aviv before being intercepted. A cloud of smoke could be seen in the sky from the hotel where US Secretary of State Antony Blinken was staying on his latest visit to the region to try to renew cease-fire talks.

On Wednesday night, the Israeli military said another four "projectiles" crossed from Lebanon into Israel, with two intercepted and one falling in open land. There were no immediate reports of any injuries, the military said.

Safieddine, a powerful cleric within the party ranks, had been expected to succeed Hassan Nasrallah, one of the group's founders, who was killed in an Israeli airstrike last month. Hezbollah's statement said Safieddine had "joined his brother, our most noble and precious martyr", Nasrallah.

Israeli strike on school-turned-shelter in Gaza kills 16

Palestinian medical officials say an Israeli strike on a school where displaced people were sheltering in the central Gaza Strip has killed at least 16 people. —*PTI*

WAR WATCH MIDDLE EAST

### 2 held in SL for plotting against Israelis

COLOMBO, 24 OCT

Two persons have been arrested in Sri Lanka on suspicion of planning a terror attack on Israeli nationals in the country after India provided intelligence on the possible threat, police said on Thursday. Security was beefed up in the eastern coast surfing resort of Arugam Bay following information about a possible attack in the area. Two persons have been arrested by the Terrorism Investigation Division of the police. —*PTI*

## BRICS denounces Israel for 'mass killings'

KAZAN, 24 OCT

Leaders from BRICS countries on Wednesday called for an immediate, permanent ceasefire in Gaza Strip and the release of hostages from "both sides", while denouncing Israel for its military offensive that has led to "mass killings" of civilians in that territory.

The escalating conflict in West Asia figured prominently in the Kazan Declaration, adopted by the leaders who participated in the 16th summit of the group in this Russian city.

BRICS includes Iran which faces possible retaliation from Israel after it launched a barrage of ballistic missiles at the Jewish nation on 1 October. Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa were the initial members of the group, which has now expanded to include Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates.

**Xi asks BRICS to achieve common security**

Global South marching together is monumental in world history and unprecedented in human civilisation, Chinese President Xi Jinping said and called on BRICS Plus countries to strive for common security.

Xi said the 'BRICS Plus' countries should be a stabilising force for peace, strengthen global security governance. —*PTI*

## France, others pledge aid to support Lebanon

PARIS, 24 OCT

Emmanuel Macron **PHOTO: ANI**

France will provide a 100-million euro ($108 million) aid package to support Lebanon, French President Emmanuel Macron told an international conference Thursday in Paris.

Macron said "in the immediate term, massive aid is needed for the Lebanese population, both for the hundreds of thousands of people displaced by the war and for the communities hosting them". The war between Hezbollah militants and Israel has displaced a million people in the country, killed over 2,500 and deepened an economic crisis. Germany pledged a total of 96 million euros in humanitarian aid to both Lebanon and neighbouring Syria, also deeply affected by escalating violence in the Middle East. Italy this week announced an additional $10.8 million in aid for Lebanon.

French organisers hope the Paris conference, which gathered over 70 nations and international organisations, will raise enough money to provide the $426 million in humanitarian aid the United Nations says is urgently needed. —*PTI*

## Turkey strikes Kurdish militant targets again

ANKARA, 24 OCT

Turkey struck suspected Kurdish militant targets in Syria and Iraq for a second day on Thursday following an attack on the premises of a key defence company which killed at least five people, the state-run news agency reported.

The National Intelligence Organisation targeted numerous "strategic locations" used by the Kurdistan Workers' Party, PKK, or by Syrian Kurdish militia that are affiliated with the militants, the Anadolu Agency reported. The targets included military, intelligence, energy and infrastructure facilities and ammunition depots, the report said. A security official said armed drones were used in Thursday's strikes. Turkey's air force carried out airstrikes against similar targets in northern Syria and northern Iraq, hours after government officials blamed the deadly attack at the headquarters of the aerospace and defence company TUSAS, on the PKK.

The assailants — a man and a woman — arrived at the TUSAS premises in the outskirts of Ankara in a taxi they commandeered after killing its driver, reports said. Armed with assault riffles, they set off explosive and opened fire, killing four people at TUSAS, including a security personnel and a mechanical engineer.

The attack occurred a day after the leader of Turkey's far-right nationalist party that's allied with President Recep Tayyip Erdogan raised the possibility that the PKK's imprisoned leader could be granted parole if he renounces violence and disbands his organisation. —*PTI*

Emergency and security teams are deployed outside the 'Turkish state-run aeroscape on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

Philippine Coast Guard personnel evacuate residents after flood waters rose due to heavy rains brought by storm trami in Philippines on Wednesday; Residents stay beside a car partially buried by volcanic mud **PHOTOS: X/PTI**

## Tropical Storm Trami leaves at least 24 dead in Philippines

MANILA, 24 OCT

Widespread flooding and landslides set off by a tropical Storm Trami in the northeastern Philippines on Thursday left at least 24 people dead, swept away cars and prompted authorities to scramble for motorboats to rescue trapped villagers, some on roofs.

The government shut down schools and offices — except those urgently needed for disaster response — for the second day on the entire main island of Luzon to protect millions of people after Trami slammed into the country's northeastern province of Isabela after midnight.

The storm was blowing over Aguinaldo town in the mountain province of Ifugao after dawn with sustained winds up to 95 kph and gusts up to 160 kph.

It was blowing westward and was forecast to enter the South China Sea later on Thursday.

Most of the storm deaths were reported in the six-province Bicol region, southeast of Manila, where at least 20 people died, including 7 residents in Naga city, which was inundated by flash floods as Trami was approaching Tuesday, dumping more than two months' worth of rainfall in just 24 hours at high tide, regional police chief Brig Gen Andre Dizon and other officials said. —*PTI*

## Hurricane Kristy strengthens into Category 4 storm

MEXICO CITY, 24 OCT

Hurricane Kristy strengthened into a Category 4 storm on Wednesday and was expected to remain away from land as it churns in the Pacific Ocean, forecasters said.

The major hurricane was 1,140 kilometres south-southwest of the southern tip of the Baja California peninsula of Mexico, and was moving west at 31 kph. It had maximum sustained winds of 250 kph, just shy of Category 5 status, according to the Miami-based National Hurricane Centre.

The storm was expected to continue moving over open waters. Waves generated by Kristy will affect portions of the west coast of the Baja California peninsula late this week.

Hurricane Kristy strengthened into a Category 3 storm in the Pacific Ocean on Wednesday and was expected to remain away from land as it grows more powerful, forecasters said. —*PTI*

## CANADA MPS CALL FOR TRUDEAU'S RESIGNATION

CANADA, 24 OCT

Disgruntled members of Canada's Liberal party have given Justin Trudeau an ultimatum: decide early next week if you want to stay on as leader, or face the prospects of a caucus revolt.

The Prime Minister met with Liberal lawmakers in a closed-door caucus meeting where 20 MPs – none of them cabinet members – called on their leader to resign before a likely electoral drubbing in the next election. Two dozen lawmakers also signed a letter calling on Trudeau to make his decision by 28 October, but failed to give any clear consequence. At least 153 Liberal members, suggesting the mutiny still lacks widespread support. —*The Guardian*

Justin Trudeau **PHOTO: PTI**

UNDER TALIBAN LAW

## *Afghan province bans images of living beings*

ISLAMABAD, 24 OCT

An Afghan province has banned all media from showing images of living things to ensure compliance with the Taliban's morality laws.

Thursday's decision was announced by Information Ministry officials in Helmand, the latest province to crack down on broadcasting and photography of humans and animals. In August, the country's Vice and Virtue Ministry published laws regulating aspects of everyday life like public transportation, shaving, the media and celebrations reflecting authorities' interpretation of Islamic law, or Sharia. Article 17 bans the publication of images of living beings.

Helmand officials said the filming and photography of living things would stop immediately. They gave no further information about enforcement or exceptions. Last week, Taliban run-media stopped showing images of living things in the provinces of Takhar, Maidan Wardak and Kandahar in observance of the laws.

Some private channels are reported to have also stopped running pictures and videos or living things to ensure compliance. No other Muslim-majority country imposes similar restrictions, including Iran and Saudi Arabia. During their previous rule in the late 1990s, the Taliban banned most television, radio and newspapers altogether.

The Information Ministry announced it had banned 400 books that clashed with Islamic and Afghan values. The outlawed books have been collected from stores and publishing houses and replaced by religious texts, including the Qur'an. Khubaib Ghofran, wrote on X: "Any book written according to the nefarious plans of enemies in order to destroy the thought, faith, unity and culture of this nation will be collected by the Ministry of Information and Culture." —*PTI*

Afghan province bans all media from showing images of living things to comply with Taliban laws **PHOTO: X@TheTorontoSun**

## Trash balloons from N Korea hit S Korea's Prez compound

SEOUL, 24 OCT

Trash carried by a North Korean balloon fell on the presidential compound in central Seoul on Thursday in a second case raising concerns about the vulnerability of key South Korean sites during potential North Korean aggression.

The balloons fell overnight in various locations across the country. **PHOTO: X @CLASHREPORT**

The incident comes after the rival Koreas ramped up threats and rhetoric against each other over North Korea's claims that South Korea flew drones over its capital Pyongyang to scatter propaganda leaflets this month. No dangerous items were found in the rubbish that was dropped on the ground when one of the North Korean balloons burst over the South Korean presidential compound on Thursday morning.

North Korea has sent thousands of balloons carrying bags of rubbish like plastic and paper waste into South Korea since late May in a resumption of a Cold War-style psychological campaign. The trash that fell on the South Korean presidential compound in July contained no hazardous materials as well. —*PTI*

## Rupee stays unchanged at 84.07 against US dollar

**MUMBAI, 24 OCT**

The rupee stayed stuck at its near-record low of 84.07 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday as surging crude oil prices and persistent foreign fund outflow weighed on the local unit. Analysts said the selling rush by foreign investors in pursuit of better gains from the Chinese market has been preventing its recovery, while higher US treasury yields have triggered the fear of slower interest rate cut by the Federal Reserve. Also, uncertain geopolitical scenario ahead of the US election steered investors towards safe-haven bets. *—PTI*

PHOTO:PTI

## Gold, silver prices retreat from record levels

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Gold and silver prices retreated from record levels in the national capital on Thursday due to tepid demand from jewellers, according to the All India Sarafa Association. Taking a breather, gold prices of 99.9 per cent purity declined by Rs 300 to Rs 81,200 per 10 grams from the record high level of Rs 81,500 per 10 grams. Silver prices also plunged by Rs 1,000 to Rs 1.01 lakh per kg, snapping the six-day winning streak on Thursday due to reduced offtake by industrial units and coin makers. The yellow metal of 99.5 per cent purity fell by Rs 300 to Rs 80,800 per 10 grams against the previous close of Rs 81,100 per 10 grams on Wednesday. Poor demand from jewellers in the local market dragged the prices of the precious metal while firm global trends restricted losses, traders said. *—PTI*

## Kanodia Cement's IPO launch to raise around ₹800cr

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Kanodia Cement plans to launch its initial public offering to raise around Rs 800 crore and is likely to file draft document with market regulator SEBI in the next two months, a top company official said. Kanodia Cement, which currently has an annual capacity of around 5 million tonnes, is also looking to raise funds from institutional investors before filing the draft red herring prospectus (DRHP) with SEBI. Kanodia Group manufactures cement and personal hygiene products. It has recently forayed into real estate and media businesses.Gautam Kanodia, founder of Kanodia Cement, "We are expanding our cement capacity to 10 million tonnes." It has plants in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar. He said the Group is also planning to list cement business on stock exchanges." *—PTI*

## Arihant Academy acquires 51% stake in ZEAL Academy

**MUMBAI, 24 OCT**

Coaching institute Arihant Academy on Thursday said it has acquired a 51 per cent stake in Zen Educational and Learning (ZEAL Academy) at a valuation of Rs 17 crore. The acquisition will enable Arihant Academy to expand its academic portfolio in the Mumbai Metropolitan Region and cater to a larger student base with top-notch learning pedagogy, the company, which is listed on NSE SME platform, said in a filing. The company did not reveal the acquisition cost but stated that ZEAL Academy's valuation is priced at Rs 17 crore. "This also expands Arihant's presence across Navi Mumbai," it said. Kunal Pathak, Partner, ZEAL Academy, said the investment will strengthen its portfolio and will allow it to expand its offerings. Zeal Academy specializes in providing coaching on IIT, JEE (Mains & Advanced), and NEET. *—PTI*

# Sensex, Nifty fall for 4th day amid FII outflows

### Sensex touches 80,065, Nifty drops to 24,399.40

**MUMBAI, 24 OCT**

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty edged lower on Thursday, extending their losing run to the fourth straight day due to selling in FMCG and auto shares on disappointing earnings and unabated FII outflows.

In a lacklustre trade, the BSE Sensex slipped 16.82 points or 0.02 per cent to settle at 80,065.16. During the day, the benchmark hit a high of 80,259.82 and a low of 79,813.02, gyrating 446.8 points.

The NSE Nifty skidded 36.10 points or 0.15 per cent to 24,399.40 in a volatile trade.

From the 30 Sensex pack, Hindustan Unilever fell by nearly 6 per cent after the FMCG major reported a 2.33 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 2,595 crore for the second quarter ended in September 2024 impacted by moderation in demand from the urban market.

Nestle, ITC, Maruti, Asian Paints, Infosys, Tata Consultancy Services, Larsen & Toubro and HCL Technologies were the other big laggards.

Titan and Adani Ports are the gainers PHOTO: PTI

UltraTech Cement, Mahindra & Mahindra, Titan, Adani Ports, State Bank of India and Power Grid were among the gainers.

"Despite persistent selloffs by FIIs, the benchmark indices recorded only a minor loss, as India's October PMI data continued to indicate healthy growth, which also supports the RBI's growth guidelines for FY25," Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services said.

"The broader market exhibited a mixed response due to valuation corrections in sectors such as PSUs and banking & financials.

Meanwhile, the FMCG sector faced declines attributed to delayed demand recovery and margin pressures," Nair added.

Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) offloaded equities worth Rs 5,684.63 crore on Wednesday, according to exchange data. Domestic Institutional Investors (DIIs) bought equities worth Rs 6,039.90 crore.

Ajit Mishra – SVP, Research, Religare Broking Ltd said stock markets remained subdued on the weekly expiry day, ending largely flat amid mixed signals

The BSE smallcap gauge declined 0.72 per cent and midcap dipped by 0.13 per cent.

Among sectoral indices, BSE FMCG tanked 2.66 per cent. Realty (1.21 per cent), telecommunication (1.02 per cent), IT (0.64 per cent) and industrials (0.62 per cent) also declined.

Healthcare, bankex, power, commodities, energy and utilities were the gainers.

*—PTI*

FOSTERING GROWTH

# Nvidia, Reliance to build AI computing infra in India

**MUMBAI, 24 OCT**

Nvidia Corp has struck a deal with billionaire Mukesh Ambani's conglomerate Reliance Industries to build out an artificial intelligence (AI) computing infrastructure as well an innovation centre in India, the AI chip giant's CEO Jensen Huang said on Thursday.

A new major data centre by Reliance Industries will use the latest Nvidia's Blackwell AI chips.

Nvidia already has presence in six locations across India. The US firm works with enterprises, cloud providers and startups to build AI infrastructure powered by Nvidia's accelerated computing stack comprising tens of thousands of its most advanced GPUs, high-performance networking, and AI software platforms and tools.

At the Nvidia AI Summit 2024 here, Ambani and Huang had a fireside chat to discuss India's transformative potential in AI and its emerging role as a global leader in this field.

Mukesh Ambani, Jensen Huan PHOTO: ANI

"India will start with the absolutely best that Nvidia has," Ambani said.

Huang, during a press conference, told reporters here that the partnership also includes creating applications that Reliance could offer to consumers in India. "India is already world class in designing chips, Nvidia's are designed here in Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Pune. A third of Nvidia is Indian, may be more," Huang said. "Nvidia's ecosystem in India is very rich; 2024 will see a a 20 times growth in compute capacities in India," he said. *—PTI*

# Reliance Power to raise ₹1,525cr via preferential shares

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Reliance Power said it has received shareholders' approval to raise Rs 1,524.60 crore through issuance of preferential shares.

A resolution through a postal ballot notice has been passed with requisite majority, the company said in a late-night stock exchange filing on Wednesday.

According to the postal ballot notice, the company will raise up to Rs 1,524.60 crore by preferential issue of up to 46.20 crore equity shares and/or warrants convertible into equivalent number of equity shares at a price of Rs 33 per apiece.

On 23 September, the board of Reliance Power Ltd had approved raising Rs 1,524.60 crore through issue of preferential shares, wherein promoters will infuse Rs 600 crore into the company to advance its business.

PHOTO: RELIANCEPOWER

Reliance Infrastructure, the promoter of the company, will enhance its equity stake by over Rs 600 crore. The other investors who will participate in the preferential issue include Authum Investment and Infrastructure Ltd and Sanatan Financial Advisory Services. The fresh fund would be utilised for expansion of business operations directly and/or through investment in subsidiaries and joint ventures, debt reduction and for general corporate purposes, the company said.

The preferential issue will enhance the company's net worth from about Rs 11,155 crore to over Rs 12,680 crore, it said. *—PTI*

TRANSAPARENCY CONCERNS

# EU fines LinkedIn $35M for data privacy violations

**LONDON, 24 OCT**

European Union regulators slapped LinkedIn on Thursday with USD 335 million fine for violations of the bloc's stringent data privacy rules.

Ireland's Data Protection Commission reprimanded the Microsoft-owned professional social networking site over concerns about the "lawfulness, fairness and transparency" of its personal data processing for advertising purposes.

The Dublin-based watchdog is LinkedIn's lead privacy regulator in the 27-nation EU because that's where the company's European headquarters is based.

The watchdog said it carried out an investigation that found LinkedIn did not have a lawful basis to gather data so it could target users with online ads, which is a breach of the privacy rules known as

PHOTO: X

General Data Protection Regulation, or GDPR. It ordered LinkedIn to comply with the rules.

Processing personal data "without an appropriate legal basis is a clear and serious violation" of the right to data protection in the EU, Deputy Commissioner Graham Doyle said in a statement.

LinkedIn said it that while it believes it has been "in compliance" with the rules, it's working to ensure its "ad practices" meet the requirements. *—PTI*

## INTEL WINS EU BATTLE OVER $1.4B COMPETITION FINE

**LONDON, 24 OCT**

Chipmaker Intel won a fresh victory on Thursday in a long-running battle against European Union competition watchdogs when the bloc's top court confirmed a lower tribunal's decision to overturn a billion-euro antitrust penalty.

The EU's Court of Justice said it upheld the decision to annul the fine issued more than a decade ago, dismissing an appeal from the European Commission, the 27-nation bloc's top antitrust enforcer.

The court said it "rejects all of the grounds of appeal raised by the Commission,". The case dates back to 2009, when the Commission slapped Intel with a 1.06 billion euro fine (USD 1.14 billion at current exchange rates) for allegedly using illegal sales tactics to shut out smaller rival AMD. The Commission accused Intel of abusing its dominant position in the global market for x86 microprocessors. *—PTI*

# In 20 years, India to add 200 airports: Naidu

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Highlighting the growth potential of India's civil aviation space, Union minister K Rammohan Naidu on Thursday said the country might need 4,000 more planes in the next 20 years and 200 more airports are expected to be developed during the same period.

Currently, Indian carriers are operating around 800 planes and more than 1,200 aircraft are on order. The number of airports has doubled to 157 in the last 10 years and the count is expected to rise by 50 in the next 5 years.

"In the next 20 years, we might need another 4,000 aircraft to cater to the demand of the Indian aviation sector," Naidu said and stressed on the need for further developing the airport ecosystem in the country.

PHOTO: ANI

Airports have to be places for job creation, economic activities and commerce centres, he added.

India is one of the world's fastest growing civil aviation markets.

The minister was speaking after inaugurating the Airbus India and South Asia Headquarters - Training Centre in the national capital.

"With expanding air travel, the stress on pilots, both physical and mental, is kind of increasing.... state-of-the-art simulators being set up are going to provide a world-class training environment where pilots can practice complex procedures in a very realistic environment," Naidu said.

The minister also mentioned about efforts to ensure more ease of doing business and long-term plans to design and manufacture planes in India.

Civil Aviation Secretary Vumlunmang Vualnam said the air passenger traffic in the country is expected to double in the next five years from 220 million, which was achieved last year.

The Airbus centre will also serve as a pilot and maintenance training centre that will accommodate four A320neo Full Flight Simulators (FFS).

*—PTI*

# By 2026, 20% firms will use AI to reduce 50% middle management roles: Report

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

As AI continues to evolve alongside human usage, it is reshaping organizational structures, decision-making processes, and even the boundaries of technology's impact on daily life, according to Gartner.

By 2026, 20 per cent of organizations will use AI to reduce more than half of their current middle management roles.

"Through 2026, 20 per cent of organizations will use AI to flatten their organizational structure, eliminating more than half of current middle management positions," said the report.

This strategy aims to cut labor costs while boosting productivity, as AI takes over tasks like scheduling, reporting, and performance monitoring.

However, the shift could disrupt traditional mentoring pathways and leave junior employees with fewer development opportunities.

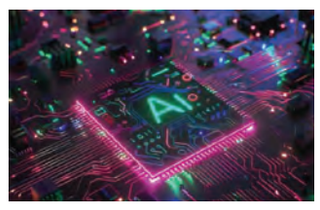


PHOTO: ANI

- AI's influence is set to extend into the boardroom, 10 per cent predicted to use AI-generated insights

Concerns over job security and increased management responsibilities for remaining staff may also pose significant challenges.

By 2029, AI's influence is set to extend into the boardroom, with 10 per cent of global boards predicted to use AI-generated insights to challenge executive decisions.

This development will empower board members to rely on data-driven guidance, thereby reshaping leadership dynamics and reducing the influence of maverick executives.

While AI insights may initially seem at odds with the traditional views of board members, their growing effectiveness will likely lead to broader acceptance.

By 2028, generative AI is expected to play a key role in corporate branding, with 30 per cent of S&P companies likely to use AI-specific labels, such as "xxGPT," to distinguish their products and create new revenue streams.

*—ANI*

ON ALERT

# *Laundering threat to online gaming: Report*

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

The fast-growing Indian online gaming sector is facing a significant threat from money laundering, necessitating urgent steps to ensure its sustained success and protect the country's robust digital economy, a report said on Thursday.

The essential measures outlined in a report by the Digital India Foundation include forming a dedicated task force for illegal operators, creating a whitelist of legal operators, combating misleading advertisements, and incorporating principles of financial integrity and international cooperation.

Other critical measures include public awareness and providing education to help users make informed decisions and avoid platforms that engage in deceptive practices. A comprehensive assessment of in-game assets, financial institutions should deploy AI/ML-driven detection models, build strong investigative teams, implement a robust programme and take decisive actions to combat money mules, it said.

Some challenges in the online gaming industry include financial integrity, cybersecurity, and user protection PHOTO: PTI

The Indian Real Money Gaming sector has become a key player in the global market with a Compound Annual Growth Rate of 28 per cent from FY20 to FY23. The sector's revenue is projected to reach USD 7.5 billion within the next five years. A gaming community of millions of gamers is driving this immense growth and also creating employment opportunities in ancillary sectors like fintech, cloud services, and cyber-security. Several challenges in the sector, such as issues of financial integrity, cybersecurity, and user protection, which could impede progress. The severity of these challenges is underscored by the fact that the illegal betting market in India attracts over USD 100 billion in deposits annually, it said, adding that, the critical issue of money laundering has been emphasised to show how in-game currencies, cryptocurrencies, and offshore betting platforms are increasingly being used for illicit activities. *—PTI*

## Adani Wilmar posts ₹311cr profit

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Edible oil firm Adani Wilmar Ltd on Thursday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 311.02 crore for the second quarter of this fiscal year on higher income.

The company had posted a net loss of Rs 130.73 crore in the year-ago period.

Its total income rose to Rs 14,565.30 crore during the July-September period of this fiscal from Rs 12,331.20 crore in the year-ago period, according to a regulatory filing. Adani Wilmar is a joint venture between Adani Group and Singapore-based Wilmar. *—PTI*

## Colgate-Palmolive posts ₹395cr profit

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

FMCG major Colgate-Palmolive India Ltd on Thursday reported an increase of 16.17 per cent in its net profit at Rs 395.05 crore in the quarter ended September 2024, led by a broad-based growth across portfolios.

The oral hygiene product maker had posted a net profit of Rs 340.05 crore in the July-September quarter a year ago, according to a regulatory filing by Colgate-Palmolive India Ltd (CPIL).

Its sales were up 10.04 per cent to Rs 1,609.21 crore during the quarter under review. It was at Rs 1,462.38 crore in the corresponding period a year ago. *—PTI*

# WASHINGTON'S 'SUNDAR' PERFORMANCE

## India 16/1 at stumps on Day 1 of 2nd Test, trail NZ by 243 runs

**PUNE, 24 OCT**

Off-spinner Washington Sundar took seven wickets as India dismissed New Zealand for 259 on day one of the second Test here on Thursday.

Picked in the playing eleven ahead of Kuldeep Yadav, Washington repaid the faith shown in him by the team management with career-best figures in his fifth Test. India's ace spinner nearly had his fourth wicket when another Kiwi batter who is lacking big scores, Daryl Mitchell (16 not out), left his crease to take on Ashwin but got an inside edge. To Mitchell's luck, the ball did not carry to Sarfaraz Khan at the short leg.

Sundar pitched the ball just perfectly to have it spinning away from Ravindra's bat and crash into the off-stump, beating the in-form batter fair and square who had otherwise struck a perfect balance in attack and defence.

At the top, Conway managed 76 from 141 balls with 11 fours but he was among Ashwin's three wickets at the top. The Kiwis' opener used his reverse sweeps against the spinners and drives down the wicket against the Indian pacers to good effect to accumulate his runs, but he had only himself to blame for missing out on scoring a century again.

- Sundar pitched the ball just perfectly to have it spinning away from Ravindra's bat and crash into the off-stump, beating the in-form batter fair and square who had otherwise struck a perfect balance in attack and defence

India crawled to 16 for one in 11 overs with Yashasvi Jaiswal (6 not out) and Shubman Gill (10 not out) at the crease, trailing by another 243 runs in the first innings.

Tim Southee cleaned up Rohit for a nine-ball duck, forcing the hosts to be extra cautious with the debacle of first innings in the Bengaluru Test still fresh in the mind.

Rohit, who was cleaned up for the third time in the series and for the second time by Southee, was squared up as he looked to defend in the line of the delivery but the ball moved away to beat his outside edge and crash into the off-stump.

Southee thus became the first among fast bowlers to take a wicket in this Test after a dominating show by the Indian spin duo of Sundar and R Ashwin (3/64), who did not allow New Zealand to break free. —*PTI*

Washington Sundar bowls a delivery on the first day of the Test match, at Maharashtra Stadium, in Pune, on Thursday **PHOTO: X/@SACHIN_RT**

India players celebrate the wicket of New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell during the first match in Pune, on Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

### Ashwin surpasses Lyon, takes 531 wkts

Indian spin veteran Ravichandran Ashwin overtook Australian legend Nathan Lyon to become the leading wicket-taker in the history of the ICC World Test Championship (WTC). Ashwin accomplished this feat during the second Test against New Zealand. Ashwin has so far taken three wickets for 48 runs in 19 overs at an economy rate of 2.50. Now in 39 matches since the tournv ament started taking place in a league format in 2019, Ashwin has picked up a massive 189 wickets at an average of 20.71, with best figures of 7/71. He has taken nine four-wicket hauls and 11 five-wicket hauls in the competition. —*ANI*

## India-Pak women's T20 WC clash gets highest attendance

**DUBAI, 24 OCT**

The India-Pakistan clash in the women's T20 World Cup here on October 6 set a new record for the highest attendance at a group stage match in the history of the showpiece, the International Cricket Council (ICC) said on Thursday. The match at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium, which India won by six wickets, was watched by 15,935 spectators. "The India versus Pakistan match at the Dubai International Stadium on 6 October set a new record for the highest attendance at a group stage match in Women's T20 World Cup history," the ICC said in a statement. The world governing body also said that the women's T20 World Cup 2024 drew 91,030 fans in total, an impressive 30 per cent increase from the previous edition. "The thrilling final between New Zealand and South Africa at the Dubai International Stadium on Sunday saw 21,457 fans in attendance, a remarkable 68 per cent increase from the last final in South Africa," the ICC said. —*PTI*

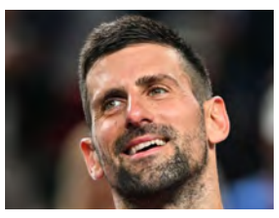


PHOTO: X/ @DjokerNole

## Novac Djokovic pulls out of Paris Masters

**PARIS, 24 OCT**

Defending champion Novak Djokovic has withdrawn from the Paris Masters, organisers said . The 37-year-old Djokovic played at the Six Kings Slam exhibition last week. Organisers did not give a reason for Djokovic's withdrawal. The former top-ranked player said in an Instagram post he is "sorry to everyone who was hoping to see me play there." "I have a lot of great memories winning seven titles there and hope to be back with you next year," he added. Djokovic has won a record seven titles at the Paris indoor tournament. His decision not to play could jeopardize his chances to qualify for the year-end ATP Finals featuring the top eight players in the race. The 24-time Grand Slam champion currently holds the sixth spot in the race. —*PTI*

## Ex-Uruguay soccer star Forlán to make pro tennis debut

**MONTEVIDEO, 24 OCT**

Former Uruguay striker Diego Forlán will make his professional tennis debut next month when he plays doubles at an ATP Challenger tournament. The 45-year-old Forlán will play with Argentina's Federico Coria at the clay court Uruguay Open, tournament organizers confirmed. It starts 11 November. Forlán, who retired from soccer in 2019, played for Manchester United, Atletico Madrid, Internazionale and Penarol. He helped Uruguay reach the semifinals of the 2010 World Cup and win the Copa America title in 2011. Forlán has played ITF Masters tournaments since last year. He said his father, Pablo Forlán, who was also a footballer, also played tennis after his retirement. —*PTI*

## Abu Dhabi gears up for Tennis League Season 3

**ABU DHABI, 24 OCT**

The World Tennis League (WTL) Season 3 is set to take place from December 19th to 22nd, 2024, featuring 16 players across 4 teams. The matches will take place at Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi. With a unique format of sports and live music, this year, the league will feature top tennis players including Nick Kyrgios, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Iga Swiatek, Aryna Sabalenka, and Daniil Medvedev, along with Indian tennis star Sumit Nagal, who will battle it out to be crowned as champions. As the sun sets, global music artists Bryan Adams, Akon, Sean Paul and Anastacia, will captivate audiences with their performances at the same venue. —*ANI*

**GOVT INTERFERENCE CITED**

## WFI withdraws India from World Championship

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) on Wednesday withdrew the Indian team from the World Championship, conveying to world governing body, UWW, that the sports ministry is interfering with its autonomy.

The senior World Championship in 12 non-Olympic categories is scheduled to be held in Tirana, Albania from 28 October.

The WFI had recently announced selection trials for the U23 and World Championship, which was challenged as contempt of court by the protesting wrestlers who questioned the legality of the selection by the suspended federation.

WFI withdrew the selection trials notice and the court, on 4 October, decided not to proceed with the contempt petition. "Satyawart Kadian, the husband of Sakshi Malik, approached the court recently saying that the WFI should be charged with contempt of court. We won't be able to send the Indian team for the World Championship now, we have conveyed this to the UWW," a WFI source told PTI.

"This is all happening because of the ministry's suspension. There are no grounds to keep the suspension. If the ministry lifts the suspension, all these issues won't crop up. It's just pathetic that wrestlers have to suffer because of a few wrestlers and the ministry is not lifting the suspension," the source added.

The WFI was suspended by the Sports Ministry on December 24 soon after the polls were conducted to elect the new office-bearers.

"Unfortunately, the MYAS (ministry) continues to interfere in the autonomy of the WFI. The MYAS has ordered on 24th December 2023 to the WFI to cease and desist from discharging the day to day administration of WFI and had directed the Indian Olympic Association (NOC of India) to make an Ad-Hoc Committee for governance of WFI," WFI President Sanjay Singh wrote in his letter to UWW President Nenad Lalovic.

WFI put on record support from the PT Usha-led Indian Olympic Association (IOA). "Though the IOA through its President Ms. PT Usha had supported the WFI in the case, it is the MYAS that is the problem creator because of their letter of 24th December 2023 which is being used as a tool to interfere in the administration of the WFI by the wrestlers." —*PTI*

Senior World Championship in 12 non-Olympic categories is scheduled to be held in Albania from 28 October **PHOTO: UNITED WORLD WRESTLING**

## BFC's unbeaten defence to face strong Kerala test

**KOCHI, 24 OCT**

Leaders Bengaluru FC, the only team yet to concede a goal in five matches this season, will face a stern test against an in-form Kerala Blasters who will have the advantage of playing at home in a crucial ISL clash here on Friday.

Having endured a 1-2 loss to Punjab FC in their season-opening encounter, Kerala Blasters FC are yet to lose another game in four matches. Since then, the Mikael Stahre-coached side have won twice and drawn twice to be placed in top-five to equal their similar run in October-November 2023.

With such a run, the Blasters are set to give the table-topping Bengaluru FC a real challenge in what promises to be an intense Southern Derby.

Gerard Zaragoza's Bengaluru side will also be battling history, having never kept a clean sheet in five ISL games at this venue, losing their last three encounters here.

Their flawless defensive record this season will be put to the test.

However, Bengaluru FC hold the edge in head-to-head encounters, having won nine out of 15 meetings in the ISL. The Blues have lost four times, while two matches ended in a draw.

In total, 40 goals have been scored in this fixture, with Bengaluru FC once again leading the way, netting 24 goals compared to Kerala Blasters' 16. —*PTI*

## India thrash Germany 5-3, but lose series in shoot-out

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Skipper Harmanpreet Singh and Sukhjeet Singh scored a brace each to hand India a 5-3 win over world champions Germany in the second hockey Test but the hosts lost the two-match series via shoot-out at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium here on Thursday.

Elian Mazkour (7th, 57th minutes) scored twice for Germany, who took the early lead, while Henrik Mertgens (60th) was the other goal getter for the visitors.

But India turned the table in the second half, with goals from Sukhjeet Singh (34th and 48th), skipper Harmanpreet Singh (42nd and 43rd) and Abhishek (45th) to level the two-match series. Germany had won the first Test 2-0 on Wednesday.

In the shoot-out, which India lost 1-3, Harmanpreet, Abhishek and Mohammed Raheel missed while Aditya was the lone scorer. India custodian Krishan Bahadur Pathak made two fine saves, but couldn't save his side from losing in the shoot-out.

The Indians started on the front foot and created early chances but failed to breach the German defence. It was Germany who took the lead in the seventh minute through Elian Mazkour, who scored with a fierce reverse shot from the right corner.

The Indians secured another penalty corner in the next minute but Manpreet Singh couldn't stop the push. The Germans secured a penalty corner in the 12th minute but Lukas Windfeder shot wide.

Two minutes from half-time, Germany got another penalty corner but failed to capitalise on that. Trailing by a goal, the Indians came out with more purpose and vigour after the change of ends, and four minutes into the third quarter secured three back-to-back penalty corners but wasted all.

It was raining goals for a pumped-up India, thereafter, with Abhishek finding the back of the net minutes later with a fierce shot from the right corner to hand the home team a 4-1 lead. —*PTI*

India's Harmanpreet Singh with teammates celebrates after India scored a goal during the second match in New Delhi, Thursday **PHOTO: PTI**

## Ex-women's hockey skip Rampal retires

**NEW DELHI, 24 OCT**

Former Indian women's hockey team captain Rani Rampal announced her retirement on Thursday, ending a glittering 16-year career during which she became an inspiration for her phenomenal rise from a small town in Haryana where her father worked as a cart-puller.

The-29-year-old will sign off as one of India's most decorated hockey players after leading the women's team to its best-ever finish at the Olympics -- a fourth place at the Tokyo Games in 2021.

Rani Rampal **PHOTO: PTI**

"It's been an outstanding journey. I never thought I will play for so long for India. I have seen a lot of poverty from childhood but focus was always to do something, represent the country," she told reporters in a press conference.

A clinical forward, who made her international debut in 2008 as a 14-year-old in the Olympic qualifiers that year, Rani scored 205 goals in her 254 outings for India.

She was honoured with the Major Dhyan Chand Khel Ratna Award in 2020 and was also a recipient of the Padma Shri, the country's fourth highest civilian award, in the same year. She was recently roped in as the national coach for sub-junior women players. —*PTI*

## India beat NZ by 59 runs to go 1-0 up in women's series

**AHMEDABAD, 24 OCT**

India pulled off an incredible 59-run win over New Zealand while defending 227 in the first women's ODI of the three-match series here on Thursday. Chasing 228 for a win, New Zealand were shot out for 168 in 40.4 overs as Indian bowlers and fielders put up a splendid effort. Radha Yadav returned with 3/35, while Saima Thakor bagged 2/26. For New Zealand, Brooke Halliday was the top-scorer with 39. Despite Tejal Hasabnis and Deepti Sharma's decent contribution with the bat in the middle overs, India were bowled out for 227 after New Zealand elected to field.

Tejal and Deepti contributed 42 and 41 runs respectively but they failed to convert their starts as India folded in 44.3 overs. A fifth-wicket partnership of 61 between Tejal and Jemimah Rodrigues (35) was the highest for India.

Amelia Kerr (4/42) was the pick of the New Zealand bowlers, while Jess Kerr claimed 3/49 and Eden Carson returned with 2/42. —*PTI*

**Brief Scores**

India 227 in 44.3 overs (Deepti Sharma 41, Tejal Hasabnis 42, Jemimah Rodrigues 35; Amelia Kerr 4/42) beat New Zealand 168 in 40.4 overs (Brooke Halliday 39; Radha Yadav 3/35) by 59 runs.

PHOTO:X/@BCCIWOMEN

**CHAMPIONS LEAGUE**

## *Raphinha scores hat trick against Bayern*

**BARCELONA, 24 OCT**

It was a great night for English clubs, and for Barcelona captain Raphinha.

Premier League leader Liverpool moved level on points with Aston Villa at the top of the Champions League standings Wednesday by extending its perfect record to three wins, and Manchester City set a new record for the most consecutive games undefeated in the history of the competition.

Liverpool edged Leipzig 1-0 with a goal from Darwin Nunez. City routed Sparta Prague 5-0 with Erling Haaland scoring twice.

Raphinha scored a hat trick as Barcelona finally beat Bayern Munich to end a series of six consecutive wins for the German team.

**Raphinha on a roll**

In Barcelona, the hosts opened the scoring within a minute as Raphinha was found by Fermin Lopez's through ball, then rounded Bayern goalkeeper Manuel Neuer with ease.

Bayern leveled the score with Harry Kane's volley, but Barcelona responded with one goal from former Bayern great Robert Lewandowski and two more from Raphinha, who was later substituted to a standing ovation.

It was Barcelona's first win over Bayern since the 2015 Champions League semifinals. Barcelona came into the game without having scored in its four games against Bayern since an 8-2 loss in 2020. Barcelona coach Hansi Flick was Bayern's coach in that game.

Raphinha celebrates after scoring a goal **PHOTO: X/@FCBARCELONA**

**Liverpool stays perfect**

Arne Slot has guided Liverpool to first place in the Premier League early in his tenure as Jurgen Klopp's replacement and now has the team on a maximum nine points in the Champions League.

The latest win in Europe came at Leipzig, one of the clubs that Klopp will be overseeing in his new role as head of global soccer at Red Bull.

Nunez tapped in the only goal in the 27th minute from Mohamed Salah's header back toward goal and could have earned a penalty in the 38th when he appeared to be tripped by Willi Orban.

"If we had left this place with a draw, I would have really felt we had lost something," Slot told TNT Sports.

"For the 70 previous minutes — except, maybe, for the first 10 — we dominated." Leipzig is the only team from the big 5 leagues to lose its three opening matches. —*PTI*